Holy Shrines of Karbala

Architectural Study with a Historical Background of the Area between and around the Two Holy Shrines in Karbala- Iraq

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge my debt to my family and relatives for their tolerance and assistance throughout the study.

DECLARATION

This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed ..... (candidate)

Date .....

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by endnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed ..... (candidate)

Date .....

Signed ..... (supervisor)

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and abstract to be made available to outside organisations.

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Date .....

ABSTRACT

Holy Shrines of Karbala

Architectural Study with a Historical Background of the Area between and around the Two Holy Shrines in Karbala-Iraq

This Ph.D seeks to initially study the history and architecture of Karbala city centre , lying between and around its two holy shrines, that used to be for many centuries the old city of Karbala where most of its religious, historical and traditional buildings existed before its sad demolition in recent years. It finally presents proposals to develop this study area and restore and revive its traditional Islamic architecture using the latest building techniques. The study is based on city plans, data and photographs taken from literature and information obtained from relevant sources such as the Municipality of Karbala and its Endowment Directorate (*awqaf*) in addition to my own previous experience as an architect with the Municipality.

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

All Islamic-Arabic words and terms have been transliterated according to those used in the references of English scholars cited in this study

LIST OF TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC CHARACTERS

CONSONANTS

ب	**b**	ض	**dh**
ت	**t**	ط	**t̲**
ث	**th**	ظ	**dh̲**
ج	**j**	ع	**a**
ح	**h̲**	غ	**gh**
خ	**kh**	ف	**f**
د	**d**	ق	**q**
ذ	**d̲**	ك	**k**
ر	**r**	ل	**l**
ز	**z**	م	**m**
س	**s**	ن	**n**
ش	**sh**	و	**w**
ص	**s̲**	ي	**y**
		ه	**h**
		ء	**ʻ**

SHORT VOWELS

ـَ	**a**
ـُ	**u**
ـِ	**i**

Chapter I:

Introduction

1.1 Islamic Cities - Perspective Background

Islamic cities in the Muslim world were originally founded on similar factors which influenced cities in other parts of the world; as a result of a grouping of people who lived closely together on one piece of land for more than one reason. These reasons may be related to natural factors such as availability of water, or a favourable climate. Other reasons may be attributed to economic and political factors, or dictated by military strategy.

Subsequently, cities grew up to a smaller or larger size depending on the appropriate circumstances and the time of history. This manner of birth and growth applies to Islamic cities whether those founded before or after the advent of Islam, either through Islamic conquests or otherwise.

The cultural and specific spiritual factors brought by Islam came alongside the natural reasons pointed out earlier to shape the Islamic city with its general distinguishable qualities. Other factors, especially the ethnic, the inherited cultural background and the style of living, played differing parts to create variable characters inside the Islamic cities. However, the cities continued to have a unified architectural character in its general nature.

Initially, Islamic cities as a whole appear, in most of its architectural characteristics, to be of a similar identity that centres on the specific spiritual features of Islam as a religion on one hand and as a social and living system on the other. Such a situation is generally reflected in the noticeable similarity of the main living characters of the inhabitants in Islamic cities. This is in spite of the relative differences stemming from objective influences related to the ethnic affiliation that specify the overall majority (Arab, African, Persian, Turkish, Berber, ...), the geographic affiliation, or climatic factors.

As for the origin, research workers have pointed out in their studies to the formational and architectural aspects of the Islamic cities such as L. Massignon, W. Marcais, A. Pauty, H. Pirenne, G. Sauvaget and the British orientalist S. Stern and many others who divided the development of Islamic cities to basically two distinct groups[1]:

1- Ancient Cities:

This group includes cities that were originally existing before the advent of Islam and were then conquered by Muslims who propagated Islam after they settled in those cities. Muslims have also given the cities a purely Islamic identity as if they were reborn again as Islamic cities with no cultural or spiritual link to their pre-Islamic history whatsoever. This is in spite of the fact that most of these cities

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[1] Quoted in; NAJI, DR. A. J., Dirasat fi Tarikh al-Mudun al-Arabia wal Islamia, Aribic Text, pp. 24- 29, Maṭba'at Jamia't al-Baṣra, Iraq, 1986.

were well known previously as capitals of empires that existed before the Islamic conquest and enjoyed a notable cultural status in the past, particularly during the Greek and Roman periods. Damascus and Istanbul are typical examples of such cities.

2- New Islamic Cities (*al-Amṣaar*):

These types of cities are exclusive to those founded by Muslims after the Islamic conquests as a consequence of it or following the stability of Muslim countries and their expansion.

One can suggest that these cities were born Islamic from the start and then developed coherently with the spiritual and political way of life that was preached by Islam and imposed by its Islamic codes. There are many cities that belong to this group, such as the cities of Kufa, Baṣra, Baghdad, Cairo, Qairawan, etc.[1].

In general, research workers[2] who studied the architecture of this type in the new Islamic cities acknowledge that its establishment passed through a number of steps in which Islam played a main role in its foundation and development.

The first step involves the site selection for building a mosque, i.e. a place for worship, which represents the core of the city or the focal point to which all exits and inlets of the city are linked. Other buildings are then located around the

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[1] NAJI, DR. A. J., Dirasat fi Tarikh al-Mudun al-Arabia wal Islamia, pp. 22- 25, Maṭba'at Jami'at al-Baṣra, Iraq, 1986.

[2] ibid., p. 56.

mosque such as the government buildings and markets followed by the residential areas. The holy cities of Makka and Madina are considered the first examples of such Islamic cities characterised by this particular type of Islamic architecture.

Holy Shrine Cities

A third type of large and important cities in the Muslim world do not belong to either of the two types mentioned earlier, but its features has not received adequate attention and interest by the above research workers. They might be called the "Holy Shrine Cities". Such cities are the ones to which this study is devoted. One of its examples is 'the holy city of Karbala' which was:

a- not existing before the advent of Islam.

b- not born for its military need, economic development or housing boom. But, it is related to cities that came into being for a number of reasons, specifically the existence of holy shrines built over the graves of the Imams who are the descendants of the holy prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

It is only the presence of holy shrines that made these cities to gradually grow without influence from either a governmental authority, military, political or economic factors. It has then changed from a nucleus to remote shia places of visitation and finally to large shia cities.

It has rapidly played an important and increasing cultural role in the progress of the subsequent Islamic periods. This role is not restricted to the city itself or local

areas but to clearly include regional and international horizons especially in the Muslim world. This may be true after it gained a reputation for its spiritual, religious, cultural and architectural importance. Moreover, it has become an area where Muslims from all over the world come to perform religious rituals and get acquainted with its religious landmarks on particular occasions as well as during normal days.

In Iraq, where a large number of such cities are found, the most important examples are the holy cities of Najaf, Karbala, Kadhimia and Sammara. These cities enjoy high respect and great importance, especially by the Iraqis, for its purely religious status as well as Muslims all over the world.

No doubt, there are other factors besides the religious ones that contributed to the development of these cities and led to their reputation and importance. However, all these factors are considered secondary and temporary if compared to the religious factor which remains the first and foremost reason for its foundation and development to a large city. The religious factor will remain to be powerful for the continuation of its future prosperity and development. Karbala is an example of the **'holy shrine city'** to which this study will be devoted and on which the subject will be dedicated.

1.2 Definition of Terms

1. City of Karbala:

It is one of the most important holy cities in the Muslim world and religious centres for the Muslim shia in the world. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit it every year. It is situated in the central part of Iraq and about 105 Km. to the south west of Baghdad, the capital of Iraq.

2. Al-Dharih:

This is the tomb which has a raised golden chest and latticed windows on all four sides. These windows are gilded and coated with silver. This tomb is considered as the heart of the shrine (*al-rawdha*).

3. Al-Hadhra:

This refers to the tomb (*al-dharih*) room, the surrounding halls (*rawaqs*) and other annexed galleries (*iwans*).

4. The Holy Shrine (*al-Rawdha*):

The holy shrines in the Muslim world are buildings which enclose the burial places of the relatives and descendants of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Most of these shrines are located in the shia centres of the Muslim world.

This study refers to the two great holy shrines and mosques of the grandsons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Imam Hussain (A. S.) and his brother al-Abbas (A.

S.). Each of these two shrines are also known by *al-rawdha*.

The holy shrine incorporates *al-hadhra* (see page 6), the open courtyard (*sahan*), and the exterior boundary wall with its rooms.

5. The Area between the two Holy Shrines:

It was demolished in 1991 and is now an open area linking the two shrines. It is 300 metres long and 160 metres wide.

6. The City Centre:

This includes the two holy shrines, its surroundings and the open area lying between them.

7. Architectural Style of the Area:

This term refers to the appearance of the building's design and architectural character influenced to a great extent by the Mesopotamian culture and the Islamic architecture.

8. Architectural Features of the Area:

This includes the domes, arches, vaults, minarets, halls (*rawaqs*), galleries (*iwans*), open courtyard (*sahan*) and the decorating works with bricks, coloured enamels (*qashani*), and engraved wood.

1.3 General Overview

1.3.1 Brief Description of Karbala

The holy city of Karbala lies between a latitude of 32° and 36¯ North and a longitude of 44° and 3¯ East. It is situated about 105 kilometres to the south west of Baghdad and about 30 kilometres to the west of the Euphrates river. It is also situated on the edge of the desert, in the middle of the alluvial plain and on the route which links Iraq with the Arabian Peninsula (see plate no. 1). It is considered to be a supply centre for the nomadic tribes living in the western desert.

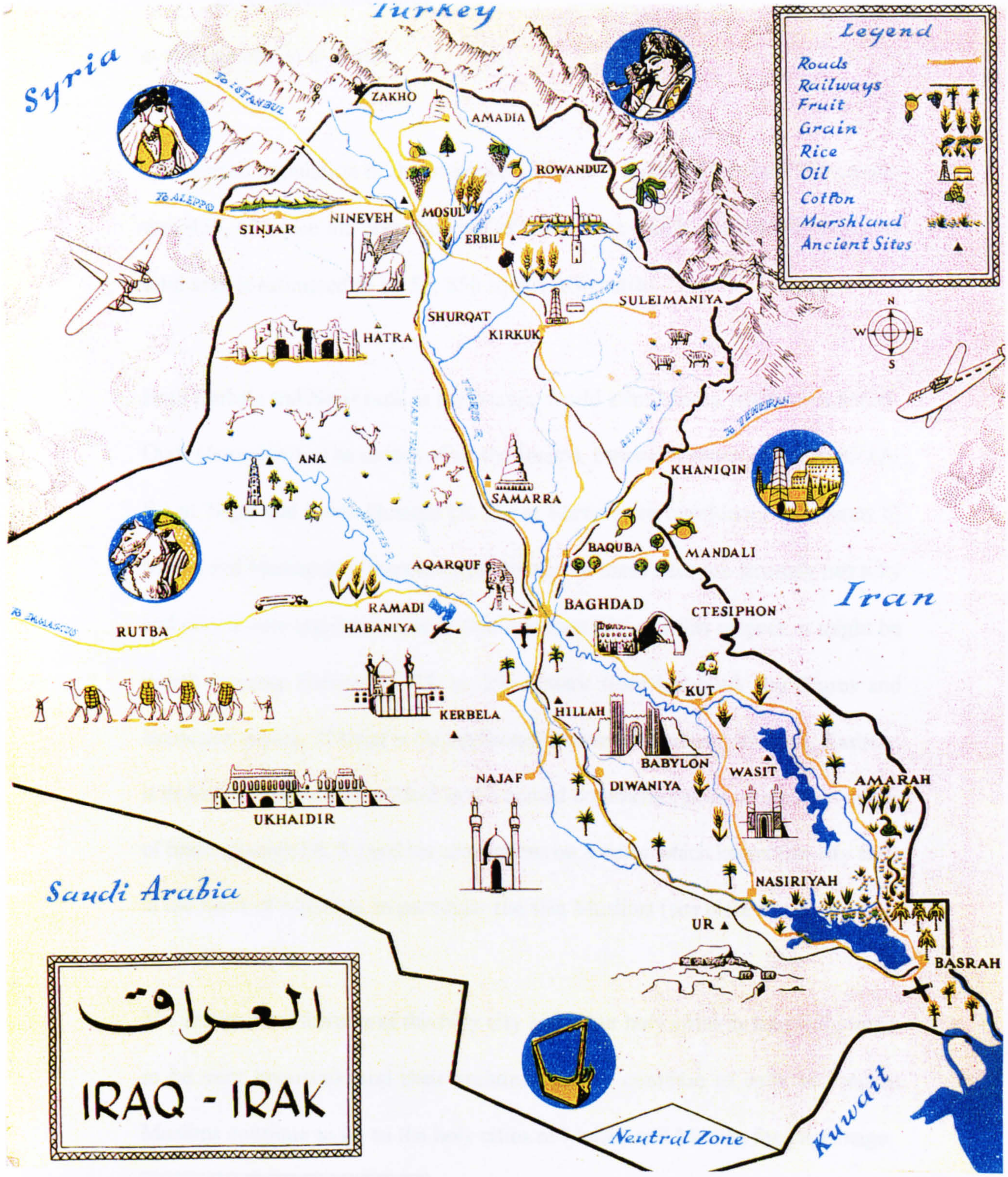
It is surrounded from three directions with orchards of date palms and fruit trees irrigated by the *Hussainiya* river branching off the Euphrates river. The city of Ramadi lies to the north west of Karbala, Hilla and Babylon to the east, the western desert to the west and south west and the holy city of Najaf and Kufa to the south. The western desert includes Ain al-Tamr or Shfatha town, *al-Ukhaidhir* fortress and *al-Razzaza* lake.

The province of Karbala comprises the following *Qadha'* (city) and *Nahia* (town):

a- the city of Karbala which is divided into the towns of:

1- Al-Hussainiya.

2- Al-Hur.



FROM THE STATE ORGANIZATION FOR TOURISM (GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT FOR TRAVEL & TOURISM SERVICES), BAGHDAD- IRAQ 1980.

b- the city of al-Hindiya or Twairij, which is divided into the towns of:

1- Al-Khairat.

2- Al-Jadwal al-Gharbi.

c- the city of Ain al-Tamr.

The overall population of the province of Karbala according to the 1988 census was 455, 686 (see the press bulletin of the province of Karbala 1988) while its total area is estimated to be 52, 856 square kilometres.

Both Karbala and Najaf rank in the Islamic world after Mecca, al-Madina and al-Quds (Jerusalem). The shrines of all the Imams, especially those of Imam Ali (A. S.) at Najaf and Imam Hussain (A. S.) at Karbala are considered extensions of Mecca and Madina and, therefore, pilgrimage to these sites are strongly heirachy and play a very important role in shia religious life[1]. In this respect, it might be worth quoting Stevens (1923: p. 39) remark from her book 'By Tigres and Euphrates' saying, "If Najaf is the intellectual centre of shiahism, its head, Karbala, is its heart". This is well evident in the annual commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and his companions on *Ashura* which keeps this city alive in the heart of Muslims, in particular the shia Muslims (see plate no. 2).

The architectural features of this holy city and other holy cities in Iraq will remain to be very important and their architecture will continue to exist as long as Muslims continue to go to the holy cities of Makka and Madina for pilgrimage

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[1] The Encyclopedia of Religions, Vol. 13, p.269, Collier Mcmillan Publishers, London, 1987.

THE OLD CITY OF KARBALA IN 1975

(TAKEN FROM THE BOOK "**LAGACY**" BY MICHAEL WOOD 1992.)

(*Hajj*) since most of these pilgrims pass through them, in particular Najaf and Karbala on their return journeys.

The city of Karbala has witnessed various kinds of deliberate damage and destruction as a result of raids, invasions, well known historical incidents and social upheavals most of which occurred during the Ottoman rule. The last of these incidents was the 1991 Uprising of Karbala city and other towns in Iraq against the ruling regime of Iraq which immediately followed the second Gulf war. The government forces entered the city of Karbala, crushing the resistance inside the city and bulldozed the core of the old city, including the traditional markets (*souk*) between the two mosques (two holy shrines) (see plate no. 3)[1].

The city was also subject to both intentional and unintentional damage by the successive governments who ruled Iraq from 1921, either because of their lack of knowledge in architecture and art or because of absence of new ideas. They also gave no due consideration to its architectural environment and its special styles.

As a result, the sight of the city centre has, to a great extent been damaged especially the area between and around the two shrines of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and that of his brother al-Abbas (A. S.). Another damage was caused by the addition of new traffic routes that involved building new roads including the opening in 1980 of the pedestrian zone between the two shrines. This has

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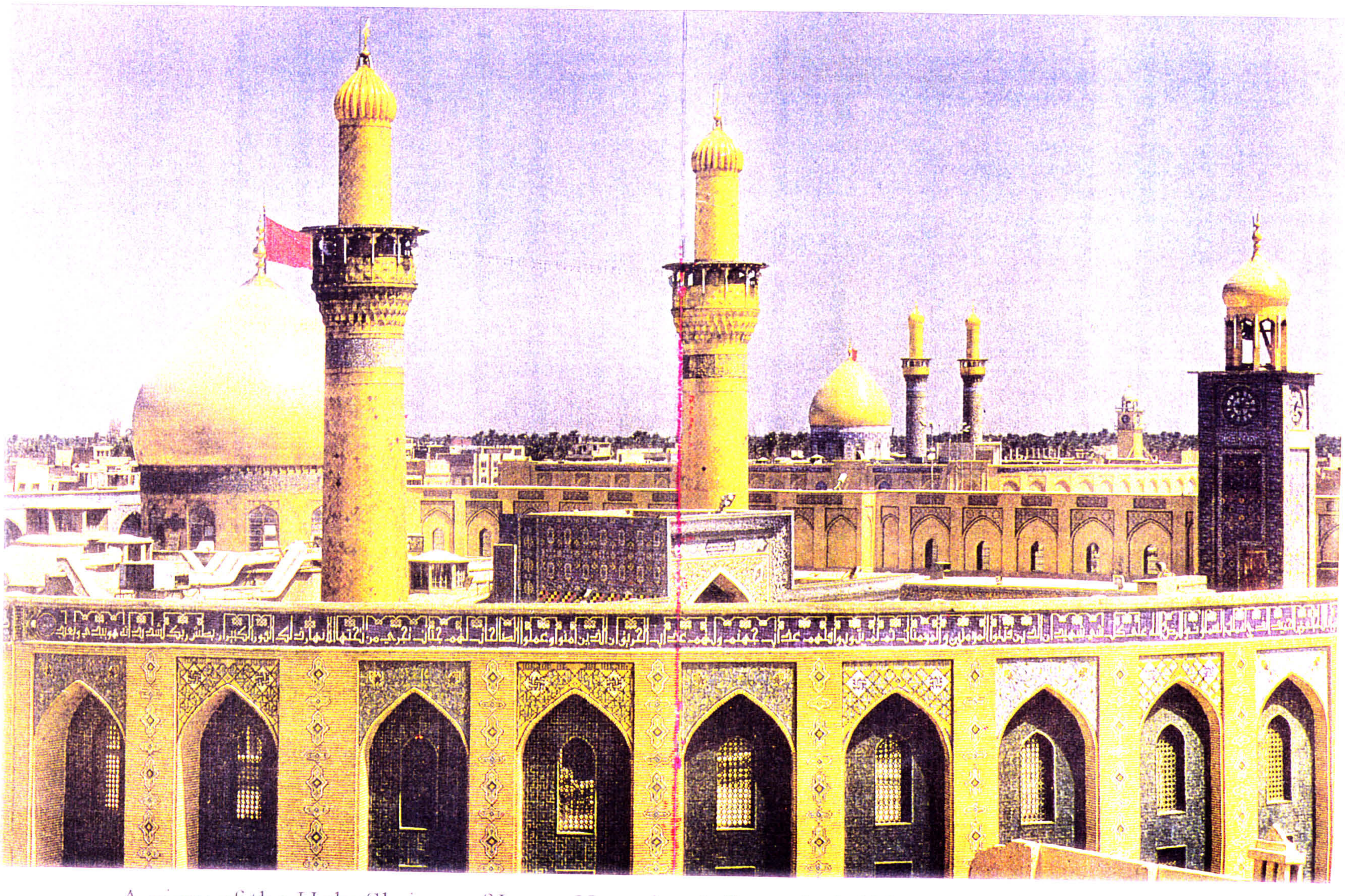
[1] WOOD, M., Legacy - A Search for the Origins of Civilizations, pp. 46, 47, Network Books, London, 1992.



A view of the Holy Shrines of Imam Hussain (A.S.) and al-Abbas (A.S.) in Karbala- Iraq.

From the book "A Humble Tribute to our Religious Heritage" published by SAYYED IQTADAR HUSSAIN, Colaba, Bombay- India, December 1994

adversely affected the heritage character of the city. Such changes could have been properly made to both suit the traffic movements and provide suitable routes for the religious processions to achieve the objectives of preserving the beauty and heritage of this city.

However, one of the main objectives of this study is to reveal the heritage and architecture of the city's distinct Islamic style to be similar to the practice in the developed countries which have given special attention to their heritage and historical buildings. The holy city of Karbala has witnessed quite the opposite treatment in spite of its international prestige and its great religious culture. This clearly reflects the ignorance and negligence of the authorities in charge.

The other objective to preserve this city is, by proper preplanning and rebuilding the city centre to restore what was in existence for decades and above all incorporate the latest scientific developments taking into consideration the redesign of the confined area between the two shrines.

1.3.2 Places of Interest

1. The shrines of Imam Hussain and his brother al-Abbas are considered, in addition to their religious importance, an example of the most exquisite Islamic architectural and decorative designs with their lofty golden domes and minarets.

2. Eight kms. from Karbala on the way to *al-Razzaza* Lake lies the shrine of *al-*

Hur al-Reyahi.

3. On the way to Baghdad about 12 kms. from Karbala lies the shrine of *Awn bin Abdullah bin Ja'far*.

4. *Al-Razzaza* Lake 14 kms. south west of Karbala where cabins and chalets have been put up to provide facilities for tourists, and an extensive area has been gardened.

5. *Ukhaidhir* fortress: 60 kms. from Karbala, built during the first Abbassid period. It is a huge fortress surrounded by huge walls. It comprises halls, large rooms, stores, houses, baths and a mosque. The State Organization for Tourism has converted part of this fortress to a rest house.

6. Ain al-Tamr: 80 kms. from Karbala, a lovely oasis with palms, groves and fruit orchards with springs of mineral waters spread around it.

1.3.3 Economic Importance of Karbala

Moreover, Karbala is considered to be an important agricultural city in Iraq which provides a good source of income because of its fertile land and the abundance of water supplies. It produces fruits, summer crops and vegetables. A number of factories are located in Karbala for processing and packaging the above products as well as dairy and date palms products. There are also factories for producing

building materials such as clay bricks (*a'jur*), enamel tiles (*qashani*) and other handicrafts.

1.4 Aims of the Study

1.4.1 General Aims

a. To study the historical stages of the city of Karbala and its architectural development.

b. To study its religious and traditional buildings.

1.4.2 Specific Aims

a. To analyse the present situation of the city from the architectural point of view and the problems created by the demolition of the city centre lying between and around the two holy shrines.

b. To present suggestions and recommendations for the study area which includes legislations to control the architectural design of all new buildings and to preserve existing religious and traditional buildings.

1.5 Methodology

The following sources of information and data will be utilized in this research study:

1- Historical books about the city of Karbala and those focusing on the architectural development recorded in different languages such as Arabic, English and Persian.

2- References, reports and official studies published by the Iraqi government which complement the overall picture presented by the sources mentioned in (1) above. This will include official reports published by the British government during its occupation of Iraq between 1914 and 1918 and even prior to this period which incorporate useful and notes for this research.

3- Maps and drawings, recent and old, which gives an architectural picture of the development of the city and its different parts throughout the modern times of the city supplied by the Municipality of Karbala.

4- Photographs and pictures drawn by foreign tourists and travellers which show the architectural features of the important city buildings.

5- Interviews with specialists in the architecture of Islamic cities of Iraq to establish a sufficient background in order to propose a plan for rebuilding the

demolished parts of the city and improving the existing buildings to be consistent with the architectural development of the city.

6- Study the architectural details of the traditional buildings in the city of Karbala especially the religious ones. This will assist in the rebuilding of the demolished buildings and will certainly show the architectural style of which Karbala is well known.

7- In this research study, reference will be made to my previous work as an architect with the Municipality of Karbala, as well as the recorded notes and the studies of the city architecture including the recently acquired new photographs which show the architectural features of the city buildings.

Chapter II: Historical Background

2.1 Introduction.

The aims of this chapter are to study the historical details of Karbala and its influence on various aspects, including developments, in its architecture. In the pre-Islamic periods, the areas around the present site of the old city of Karbala were important from the historical, religious and geographical points of view.

The present city of Karbala, this holy place born with the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A. S.) in the event of al-Taff in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.), has witnessed developments in its various historical stages. These developments have had positive influence on its prosperity and architectural growth. This is attributed to the attention and care the city received in various Islamic periods by rulers and governors (*wali*) who succeeded in ruling Iraq. They represented states of different cultures the most important of which are those during the Abbasid, Buwaihid, Jela'iri, Safavid and Ottoman periods.

The city of Karbala attracted the attention of a number of Muslim and non-Muslim historians and travellers and also a number of orientalists who were interested in the history of this city. Each of them covered a section or sections of the history of this city. However, it is to be noted with regret that this city lacks an overall scientific research study by scholars on the history, heritage and architecture of

this rich city which are appropriate to its important historical and religious status.

Therefore, it is hoped that this study will become a step in the right direction in paving the way for further research work in the future.

This chapter covers the historical stages of Karbala from its birth to present day and is divided in five stages as follows:

- Pre-Islamic History of Karbala.
- The Event of al-Taff.
- History of Karbala from the Event of al-Taff to the Safavid Rule in Iraq.
- History of Karbala During the Safavid and Ottoman Periods.
- Karbala in Modern Times: from the Establishment of the State of Iraq in 1921 up to the Present.

2.2 Pre-Islamic History of Karbala

Karbala, which is not far from Babylon, is believed to belong to the ancient civilisations of the Semites in Iraq and those of Babylon. It was reported in studies of the ancient history of Iraq that the term 'Karbala' consists of two syllables, 'Kur' and 'Babel' to refer to a group of ancient Babylonian villages. The most important and largest of these villages was known as 'Ninevah' it was situated to the north east of the present site of Karbala- this is not the ancient city of 'Ninevah' which was the capital of the Assyrian near the city of Moṣul in the north of Iraq. The village of Ninevah was said to be populated in ancient times and inhabited by the Semites. It now consists of a series of ancient hills, known as Ninevah Hills (*telal Naynawa*), extending from the south of *al-Hindiya* dam on the Euphrates river, 30 kilometres from present site of Karbala to the estuary of *al-Alqami* river discharging into the marshes near Karbala[1].

It is also stated that Ninevah was a sub-district which lied in the plains of Kufa and in the vicinity of Karbala where Imam Ḥussain (Alaihi Salam) was killed[2].

It is also reported that a few miles away in the north western part of the city of Karbala, there were hills and ruins believed to be the original site of Karbala. It is worth noting that before the First World War, the inhabitants of the surrounding

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[1] AL-SHAHRISTANI, M. A. H. D., Nahdhat al-Ḥussain, Arabic Text, p. 89, Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, Lebanon.
- Al-ḤASSANI, A. R., Moujaz Tarikh al-Buldan al-Iraqia, Arabic Text, 2nd Edition, p. 61, Maṭba'at al-Irfan, Lebanon.

[2] ABDUL HAQ, S. A., Merasid al-Ittila' ala Asma' al-Amkina wal Bika', Arabic Text, pp. 261, 262, Inter Press.

areas removed from these ruins some of the large *fershi* bricks (flat baked clay brick, square shaped and 4- 5 cm. thick.), like neo-Babylonian bricks, and carried them to Karbala for house buildings in the city[1].

Karbala continued to flourish during the Kildanian period. Louis Massignon, a French orientalist, mentioned in his book *The Plans of Kufa* that Karbala was in the past situated in a town called 'Ninevah' and was a place of worship for the Keldanians[2].

Archaeological excavation in the area led to the discovery of a group of caves and industrial caverns numbering about 400 and situated about 30 kilometres to the south west of the present location of Karbala. It is estimated that these caves and caverns were dug around 1200 B. C. and perhaps were first used as defensive shelters and later converted into a cemetry[3].

Moreover, Kerbala preserved its status during the rule of the Tenokhids, Lakhmids and Menathera when Hira was their capital[4].

From the foregoing, one can deduce that Karbala has a long history and has been known since the beginning of ancient civilization. It was one of the main cities of

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[1] A'L-TUMA, A. H. A., Bughyat al-Nubala' fi Tarikh Karbala, Arabic Text, p. 8, Matba't al-Irshad, Baghdad.

[2] MUDDARIS, M. B., Shahre Hussain (city of Hussain), 2nd Ed., Persian Text, p. 10, Intisharat Kulaini, 1994.

[3] SALEH, DR. Q. R., Hand Book of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq, Arabic Text, p. 222, al-Mu'assasa al-'Amma lil Athar wal Turath fil Iraq, 1987.

[4] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, 2nd Edition, Arabic Text, p. 24, al-Alami Establishment for Printing, Beirut, Lebanon, 1983.

Tasooj al-Nahrain which were lying on the banks of the *Balakubas* river (old Euphrates). Places of worship were known to have existed in this city. This can be concluded from its old names such as Amoura, Maria and Saffora. Graveyards were scattered around it and corpses of humans were discovered inside clay pots which dates back to the pre Christian period. The people who inhabited this place used to live on farming as the land was fertile and water was plentiful and brought from the many wellsprings scattered in the area[1].

Another indication that Karbala or the kilns around it are ancient is the existence of ruins and old hills only a few miles from the present location of the city[2].

Following the conquest of Iraq by the Sassanians in 310 A. D. during the reign of their ninth king, Shahpur Thul Aktaf, they divided Iraq into ten provinces and each of them was called '*Tasej*'. These in turn were divided into small administrative units called '*Rustaq*'. The tenth province, divided into six administrative units, was the area lying between the city of *Ain al-Tamr*, located 80 kms. from Karbala in the south western direction, and the Euphrates river. One of these provinces was called *Tasej al-Nahrain* (the city between two rivers). It was so called because it was lying between the two rivers, the *al-Alqami* river and *Shahpur* trench[3].

It is also said that before the advent of Islam, the Majoos (ancient Iranians) also

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[1] JAWAD, DR. M., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, Ed. by Khalili, J., 1st Edition, Vol. 2, Karbala Section, Arabic Text, p. 16, Dar al-Ta'aruf, Baghdad, 1966.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 24.

[2] ibid., p. 18.

[3] MUDDARIS, M. B., Shahre Hussain, pp. 10, 11.

had houses and places of worship in Karbala. In their own language, these places were called '*Meh Bar Sur Alam*' which means the 'Sacred Place'[1].

It can be concluded that Karbala was throughout the various periods a sacred place in many religions and by different races and this explains why many places of worship were found scattered around it[2].

Dr. Mustafa Jawad, a well known Iraqi historian, believes that the name 'Karbala' is not Arabic and attempts to relate its origin to the Arabic language is not valid and is bound to be faced with obstacles from both the linguistic and historical points of view since the location of Karbala is outside the Arabian Peninsula and there are other cities in Iraq whose names are not of Arabic origin such as Baghdad, Babylon and Baquba[3].

Most historians believe that the original name of Karbala is derived from the Aramaic term '*KAR-BELLA*' or the Assyrian term '*KAR-BALLATO*' or '*KAR-BEL*' which means the boundary of the God Bel[4].

Other of historians, one of whom is the linguistic expert Father Mari al-Kermali, believe that the name Karbala has been mentioned in research papers and is made

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[1] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 23.

[2] AL-ANSARI, R., Majjalat al-Noor, Issue No. 61, Arabic Text, p. 2, London, 1966.

[3] JAWAD, DR. M., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, Vol. 2, p. 16.

[4] AL-MOUSAWI, M. A., Al-Awamil al-Tarikhiyya li Nasha'at wa Tatawour al-Mudun al-Arabia al-Islamia, Arabic Text, p. 168, Manshourat wizaret al-Thaqafa wal I'lam, Baghdad, 1982.

up of two Assyrian words. In the Aramaic language the first word, '*Karb*', means temple or sanctuary and the second, '*Il*', means God. Thus, the two combined words would mean temple of God or sanctuary of God[1].

Other researchers think that the meaning of the word '*Karb*' has been transformed in Hebrew. Thus the word '*Karab*' which means "approaching" also means "fighting" or "combating" and hence the word, '*Karab*', took the meaning of battle[2].

It has been mentioned that the word, Karbala, is derived from the Arabic word '*Kerbila*' i.e. slackness or softness in feet. If we say in Arabic '*Ja'e yamshi mu-kerbilan*' this would mean 'he has come trotting'. One can conclude that the soil of this land was possibly flaccid, and therefore, the origin of its name. Another example in Arabic is when we say '*Kerbelat al-Hunta*' would mean the wheat has been refined and purified[3].

The well known scholar, Sheikh Agha Buzurk al-Tahrani, believes that the word Karbala consists of two syllables. The first, '*Kar*' meaning deed, and the second, '*Bala*' meaning high or exalted in the Persian language. The two put together would mean the high deed or heavenly deed which is imposed from above. This last meaning is close to that suggested by Father Anestas Mari al-Kermali and

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[1] Al-HASSANI, A. R., al-Iraq, Qadiman wa Hadithan, 2nd Ed., Arabic Text, p. 124, al-Irfan Press, Sidon, Lebanon, 1956. - MUDDARIS, M. B., Shahre Hussain, p. 10.

[2] JAWAD, DR. M., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, p. 11.

[3] YAQUT, Mu'jam al-Buldan, 1st Edition, Vol. 7, Arabic Text, p. 229, al-Saada Printing, Egypt, 1906.

referred to earlier[1].

The name of Karbala was known before the Islamic conquest of Iraq and before it was inhabited by the Muslim Arabs. It was mentioned by some of the Muslims who accompanied Khalid Bin al-Walid, during the conquest of its western front of Iraq[2].

It is stated in Mu'jam al-Buldan (Encyclopedia of Countries) by Yaqut al-Hamawi "that Karbala was also called al-Taff because it overlooks Iraq, since to overlook something is to get nearer to it (in Arabic: *Attala*). Also, al-Taff refers to *Taff al-Furat* i.e. the bank of Euphrates". It is mentioned too "that al-Taff is a land on the outskirts of the city of Kufa on the travellers route where the killing of al-Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (A.S.) was perpetrated. It is a semidesert close to the rural areas and included many flowing springwells such as *al-Sayd*, *al-Qatqatania*, *al-Rihema*, *Ain al-Jamal*, etc. These springwells were owned by the armed guards of the castles and palaces located beyond *Shapur* trench and was built to separate the Persians on one side and the Arabs and other people on the other side"[3].

Some of the historical references indicate that the present Karbala was surrounded by old villages at the time of arrival of Imam Hussain (A.S.) in 61 A.H. (680A.D.).

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[1] JAWAD, DR. M., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, p. 18.

[2] IBN JAREER, Tarikh al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wal Mulouk, Vol. 3, Arabic Text, p. 373, Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1962.

[3] YAQUT, Mu'jam al-Buldan, Vol.7, p. 229, 1906.
- MASAIGNON, L. A., Journey to Mesopotemia, 1st Edition, p. 48, French Ministry of Education and Art, Cairo, 1910.

These were Ninevah, Amoura, Maria, Saffora and Shfaiya[1].

Close to these villages, there was an area called al-Nawawis which was a cemetery for the Christians who lived there before the Islamic conquest of Iraq. Nowadays, the cemetery is situated to the north west of Karbala in the area of Kamalia and close to the shrine of *al-Hur al-Reyahi*[2].

Various names were used for the present city of Karbala following the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A. S.) in 61 A. H.. These were *Mashhad al-Hussain, Madinat al-Hussain, al-Buqa' al-Mubaraka, Mawdhi' al-Iptila, Mahal al-Wafa', al-Ha'er, al-Heer*, and others. However, *al-Ha'er* was the most well known name because of its sanctity and sacredness. It is worth mentioning that *al-Ha'er* has subsequently been used in general to imply the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.)[3].

Prior to this, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (A. S.) in his advance to the battle of Siffin was seen by his followers to be standing attentively and looking at the ruins and antiquities of this land. They asked him the reason for his stop to which he replied, "This land will have a great importance". He then added, "Here is their resting place; here is their massacre". They then asked with astonishment, "O'Commander of the Faithful, Who are they?". He said, "Precious ones from the

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[1] AL-KILIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, Arabic Text, pp. 13- 14, Matba't al-Najah, Baghdad, 1947.

[2] AL-KILIDAR, M. H. M., ibid, p. 13.

[3] YOUNG, G., Iraq, Land of Two Rivers, p. 18, Collins, London, 1980.
- AL-KILIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, Arabic Text, pp. 23- 297, al-Haidariya Press, Najaf, Iraq, 1967.
- TUQAN, F. A., al-Ha'er Bahith fi al-Qusour al-Amawiya fi al-Badia, Arabic Text, p. 250, Amman, Jordan, 1979.

family of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will come down here"[1].

The largest city in the area around Karbala was *Ain al-Tamr*. One of this city's well known villages is the district of *Shfatha* from which *qasebs* (dried dates) and fresh dates are brought to Karbala[2].

Another large village in the surrounding area of Karbala was al-Ghadhiria built by the tribe of Bani Asad after their move to Iraq in the dawn of Islam and therefore, is not very old. It is still called by the name of Ghadhiriyat and described to be the flat lands in the area. Nowadays, it is known as the district of Hussainiya and lies on the old Karbala to Baghdad road. It is also full of date palms and other fruit trees[3].

There was also a village near Karbala which was full of houses known as al-Uqr. It is related that when Imam Hussain (A. S.) arrived in this land, pointing to al-Uqr, said to some of his companions: what is the name of this village?. They replied that it is called al-Uqr. Al-Hussain (A. S.) then said, "may God give as refuge from al-Uqr". Then, he asked, "what is the name of this land that we are in?". They said: "Karbala".

At this point, he said, "A land of ordeal and suffering". He wanted to leave this land but was prevented from doing so as mentioned in the tale of his massacre and

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[1] AL-DAINOURI, Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal, 1st Ed., Arabic Text, p. 253, Cairo, 1960.
- JAWAD, M., ibid, p. 16.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 21.

[2] YAQUT, ibid, Vol. 4, p. 176.

[3] AL-KILIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 112.

followed whatever was to be[1].

Anyhow, Karbala did not acquire this high prestige and sacred position had it not been for the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and his followers on the tenth of the holy month of *Muharram* in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.) and in that very place which lies precisely between old Karbala and al-Nawawis. This was perviously predicted by Imam Hussain (A. S.) before reaching the land of Karbala and meeting his fate. He predicted by saying, "I see my body parts being torn apart by desert wolves in a place between al-Nawawis and Karbala"[2].

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[1] YAQUT, ibid, Vol. 7, p. 229.
- DAINOURI, ibid, pp. 252- 253.

[2] IBN TAWOOS, S., al-Luhuf fi Qatla al-Tufuf, Arabic Text, p. 25, Dar al-Murtadha, Beirut, Lebanon.
- AL-SHAHROUDI, N. A., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, 1st Ed., Arabic Text, p. 13, Dar al-Uloum, Beirut, Lebanon.

2.3 The Event of al-Taff.

The Islamic history of Karbala had witnessed a terrible event which is considered to be one of the most tragic incident and unprecedented in the Islamic world. That incident was the al-Taff event (also known as *Ashura*) which took place on the 10th day of the holy month of *Muharram*, 61 A. H. (680 A. D.) between the forces of good represented by Imam Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.) and his numbered companions on one side, and the forces represented by Yazid ibn Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufian and his larger and well equipped army on the other. Imam Hussain, also known by the nickname Aba Abdillah, was born on the fifth day of Shaaban, 4 A. H. (626 A. D.). His father was Amirul Mu'mineen (Commander of the Faithful) Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.) who was the cousin of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the fourth Rashideen Caliph. His mother was Fatima al-Zahra', the prophet's daughter, who gave birth to two other sons. The eldest was Imam Hassan (A. S.) and the youngest, Muhsin, died in his childhood. She also had two daughters, Zainab al-Kubra and Um Kalthum al-Kubra. After the death of Fatima (A. S.), Imam Ali (A. S.) married Um al-Banin bint Huzam who is a descendant of the tribe of Bany Kelab. She gave birth to four sons, al-Abbas, Jaafar, Abdullah and Othman who were all killed with Imam Hussain (A. S.) in the event of al-Taff [1].

Imam Hussain (A. S.) lived for six years and six months by the side of the kindly

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[1] IBN JAREER, Tarikh al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wal Mulook, Vol. 5, Arabic Text, pp. 468, 469. Dar al-Maarif, Cairo, 1963.
- IBN ASAKIR, Tarjamat Raihant Rasoolil lah al-Imam al-Hussain (A. S.)- Tarikh Dimashq, 1st Ed., Arabic Text, p. 23. Mu'assast al-Mahmoodi lil Tiba'a wal Nashir, Beirut, 1978.

messenger (PBUH) until the prophet death on the 28th of the month of the *Safar*, 11 A. H.(633 A. D.)[1].

It is transmitted by Anes ibn Malik that the Messenger of God (PBUH) was asked, "which members of your family are most loved by you?". He said, "they are al-Hassan and al-Hussain". He used to ask his daughter Fatima (A. S.), "call my two sons so that I could smell and hug them"[2].

Al-Tirmidi has related in a well supported *Hadith* (tradition) that the messenger of God (PBUH) had said, "Hussain belongs to me and I belong to Hussain; may God loves whoever loves Hussain; Hussain sibtun minal asbat" (grandsons from my daughter Fatima)[3].

Imam Ahmad and Tirmidi narrated in their Sanads (books of *Hadith*) off Abi Sa'eed al-Khidri (May God be pleased with him) that the prophet had said, "al-Hassan and al-Hussain are masters of the youth of paradise"[4].

After the martyrdom of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.) on the 21st of the month of *Ramadhan*, 40 A. H.(661 A. D.), Imam Hassan (A. S.) became the Islamic Caliph while Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufian was governor of al-Sham (Syria, Palestine

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[1] AL-AMIN S.M., A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, Arabic Text, p. 578. Dar al-Taaruf lil Matbu'at, Beirut, 1983.
- AL-MAJLISI, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 22, Arabic Text, p. 514. Matba't al-Wafa', Beirut,1983.

[2] AL-TIRMIDI, Sunan al-Tirmidi, Vol. 5, Arabic Text, p. 658, Hadith No. 3772, Matba't Dar Ihya'al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon.

[3] ibid, Hadith No. 3775, p. 658.

[4] ibid, Hadith No. 3781, p. 661.

and Lebanon). The first signs of war between the army of Imam Hassan (A. S.) and that of Mu'awiya started to appear at Kufa. Imam Hassan (A. S.) faced this disorder with prudence and vigilance. He thus behaved with wisdom, and a peace accord was finally signed between him and Mu'awiya with one of its conditions stipulating that Imam Hassan (A. S.) would succeed Mu'awiya in the position of Caliph. However, Mu'awiya assassinated Imam Hassan (A. S.) by slipping poison into his food and he died on the 7th day of the month of *Safar*, 50 A. H. (670 A. D.)[1].

This was the beginning of a war waged by Mu'awiya and his son Yazid on Imam Hussian (A. S.) and *Ahlul Bait* (the family of prophet Muhammad (PBUH)). In 49 A. H (670 A. D.), Mu'awiya called on the people to give pledge of allegiance (Bay'a) to Yazid. The people disliked and disapproved such a call as they know of Yazid evil behaviour. Imam Hussain (A. S.), Abdullah ibn Omar, Abdullah ibn al-Zubair, Ibn Abbas and others refused to give *Bay'a* to Yazid to become a Caliph[2].

When Mu'awiya went to Makka to perform *Umra*, he delivered a speech to Muslims and asked them to give their *Bay'a* to Yazid. A large number yielded to his demand after being subjected to threat and intimidation[3].

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[1] AL-AMIN, S.M., Ay'an al-Shia, Vol. 1, pp. 570, 571.
- Al-ASFAHANI, ABI FARAJ, Maqatil al-Talibiyeen, 2nd Ed., Arabic Text, pp. 60, 80. Mu'assast al-A'lami lil Matbou'at, Beirut, 1987.

[2] IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, p. 303, 1963.

[3] IBN KATHEER, al-Bidaya wal Nihaya fil Tarikh, Vol. 8, 1 st. Ed., Arabic Text, pp. 79, 80. Matba'at al-Saada, Egypt, 1932.
- IBN AL-ATHEER, al-Kamil fil Tarikh, Vol. 4, Arabic Text, p. 6, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 1965.
- IBN ASAKIR, p. 197.

After the death of Mu'awiya on the month of *Rajab*, 60 A. H. (679 A. D.), Yazid wrote to al-Walid ibn Utba, the governor of Madina, ordering him to take *Bay'a* from the people in general and from Hussain (A. S.) in particular. As Imam Hussain (A. S.) realized there was a pressure on him from the Amawids (advocates of Yazid) to give *Bay'a* to Yazid, he left Madina to Makka. Upon his arrival, the people of Makka, the pilgrims and those from other places had gathered together and gone to meet with him[1].

The people of Kufa learnt of the abstention of Imam Hussain (A. S.) from giving *Bay'a* to Yazid. Therefore, they wrote many letters and sent many envoys to Imam Hussain (A. S.) inviting and asking him to come quickly so as to give their *Bay'a* to him as a Caliph instead of to Yazid. Imam Hussain (A. S.) was obliged to send his cousin, Muslim ibn Aqeel ibn Abi Talib, to Iraq to find out the truth of the matter and he also sent with him a message to the people of Iraq[2].

Muslim ibn Aqeel left heading for Kufa. When the people of Kufa heard of his arrival, they went to see him in the residence of Hani ibn Urwa, one of the nobles of Kufa who was host to ibn Aqeel. They gave their *Bay'a* to Imam Hussain (A. S.) and took an oath to defend him with their souls and wealth. Initially, twelve thousand people gathered to present their *Bay'a* to Muslim and this eventually

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[1] IBN TAWOOS, S., al-Luhuf fi Qatla al-Tufuf, p. 10
- IBN AL-JAWZI, al-Muntadham fi Tarikh al-Umam wal Mulook, Vol. 5, Arabic Text, p. 327, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmia, Beirut, 1992.

[2] AL-MAS'OODI, Murooj al-Dhahab, Vol. 3, Arabic Text, p. 64, al-Maktaba al-Islamia, Beirut, Lebanon.
- IBN AL-ATHEER, Vol. 4, p. 20
- The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 6, p. 141, 15thEd., Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., Printed in U.S.A., 1985.

reached eighteen thousand[1].

Muslim ibn Aqeel wrote to Imam Hussain (A. S.) informing him that the people of Kufa gave their *Bay'a* and asked him to speed up his coming. The Imam made the necessary preparations and headed for Kufa[2].

Consequently, Yazid ibn Mu'awiya removed the governor of Kufa, al-Nu'man ibn Bashir al-Ansari, for his weak stand towards Imam Hussain (A.S.) and appointed the governor of Basra, Ubaidillah ibn Ziyad, in his place as governor of both Basrah and Kufa[3].

Ibn Ziyad tightened the rule on the people of Kufa and pursued the supporters of Muslim ibn Aqeel until Aqeel remained on his own and eventually fell in to the hands of Ubaidillah ibn Ziyad. Ibn Ziyad gave his order to kill Muslim and cut off his head. He also ordered the killing of Hani ibn Urwa[4].

This was the start of dreadful actions which the history of Islam has not witnessed before. The story of the betrayal of the people of Kufa to Muslim ibn Aqeel is lengthy and saddening. It gives an indication of the submitting nature to power,

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[1] IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, p. 375, 1963.
- IBN AL-ATHEER, Vol. 4, p. 22
- IBN ASAKIR, p. 207.

[2] IBN ASAKIR, p. 207.
- AMIN, DR. H., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, Ed. by Khalili,J., 1st Edition, Vol. 2, pp. 48, 49.Section on Karbala, Dar al-Ta'aruf, Baghdad, 1966.

[3] IBN KATHEER, Vol. 8, p. 152.
- Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 6, p. 741, 15th Ed..

[4] AL-MAS'OODI, Murooj al-Dhahab, Vol. 3, p. 69
- IBN KATHEER, Vol. 8, p. 157.

money, fame and position even if these may conflict with beliefs, values and ideals. When the people of Madina found out of Imam Hussain's intention to leave to Kufa, they sympathized with him and warned him against leaving. The men of good opinion and those who loved him advised him not to leave for Iraq. Among them were Abdullah ibn Abbas, ibn Omar, Abu Saeed al-Khidri, Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari and Saeed ibn al-Musayeb. Al-Farazdaq, a well known poet, met the Imam on his way to Kufa. The Imam (A. S.) asked him about the position of the people of Kufa. He said, 'Oh son of the messenger of God, their hearts are with you, their swords are against you and victory is from Heaven'[1].

On route to Kufa, when Imam Hussain (A. S.) knew of the murder of his cousin, Muslim ibn Aqeel, he gathered his supporters and whoever joined him on his way from the Arabs. He addressed them and told them of what happened to Muslim and added, "our advocates betrayed us. Therefore, whoever wants to leave is free to do so and we have no claim on him". They then dispersed, some went east and others west and no one remained except those sincere companions who came with him from Madina and few others who joined him later on his way to Kufa[2].

When Ubaidillah ibn Ziyad learnt of where Imam Hussain (A. S.) was heading to, he took various military precautions and tried hard to watch the movements of the Imam (A. S.). He sent one of his army commanders, al-Hur ibn Yazid al-Reyahi,

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[1] IBN KATHEER, Vol. 8, pp. 160, 161, 166, 167.
- AL-DAINOURI, p. 244.
- The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 6, p. 741, 15th Ed..

[2] IBN TAWOOS, al-Luhuf fi Qatla al-Tufuf, p. 30.
- IBN AL-ATHEER, Vol. 4, p. 43.

with one thousand horsemen for this purpose. They met with the caravan of al-Hussain (A. S.) at a place called Sharaf. The mission of al-Hur, as it seems, was to cut off the road on the Imam (A. S.) and not to leave him until he brings him to Kufa. When Imam Hussain (A. S.) sensed what was intended against him and his supporters, he instructed them to turn back towards Hejaz (Makka and Madina). However, the Amawiyed commander, al-Hur ibn Yazid, prevented them from doing so. Al-Hussain (A. S.) then questioned this action and said to al-Hur, 'what do you want?' He said that he wanted to take off with him to the Amir, Ubaidillah ibn Ziyad. Imam Hussain (A. S.) then responded by saying, "by God, I will not surrender to you". Al-Hur then said, "I will not, therefore, let you go". The debate grew between them until eventually al-Hur said, "I was not ordered to fight you but merely instructed not to part with you until I brought you to Kufa. Therefore, take a route which does not lead you to Kufa or return you back to Hejaz so that I may write to the Amir, Ubaidillah ibn Ziyad. Then, perhaps, by the grace of God, a mandate may come sparing our lives and subsequently does not torment me with a harm that may beset upon you"[1].

Imam Hussain (A. S.) proceeded with his companions, while al-Hur moved close by them, until he reached Adib al-Hejanat (called after a place where camels of al-Nu'man used to graze). He then went on until he arrived at a palace known as *'Qasr* (palace) *ibn Muqatil'*. Whenever Imam Hussain (A. S.) wanted to turn back towards the desert, al-Hur ibn Yazid moved him back towards Kufa, until he

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[1] IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, p. 402.
- IBN AL-ATHEER, Vol. 4, pp. 47, 48.

reached Ninevah. On the second of *Muharram*, 61 A. H. (680 A. D.), he arrived at a place close to the Euphrates river known as Karbala and then camped there[1].

Imam Hussain (A. S.) asked, "what is the name of this land". They told him Karbala. He then said, "a land of grief and affliction"[2].

Ubaidillah ibn Ziyad wrote to Omar ibn Saad, the commander of the Amawiyed army, asking him to blockade al-Hussain (A. S.) and his companions from reaching the Euphrates river and not to be allowed to taste even one drop of it. Following this, Omar ibn Saad dispatched one of his commanders, Omar ibn al-Hejjaj, to head a force of five hundred horsemen who occupied all the streams and rivulets of the Euphrates river and blocked all the routes to prevent al-Hussain (A. S.) and his companions from reaching the water. His aim was to trouble the Imam (A. S.) to force him to surrender and also close all outlets in the face of whoever wanted to join him via the waterway, and thus overdid their revenge and satisfied their thirst in inflicting more suffering. This blockade was only three days before the killing of al-Hussain (A. S.). The greater suffering that the Imam experienced was for him to watch his children and noblewomen of Islam screaming because of the killing pain of thirst. The children were crying, "water, water"[3].

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[1] IBN AL-ATHEER, Vol. 4, pp. 49- 51.
- AL-DAINOURI, p. 250.

[2] IBN KATHEER, Vol. 8, pp. 176, 177.
- IBN TAWOOS, p. 33.

[3] AL-QARASHI, B. S., Hayat al-Imam al-Hussain, 1st Ed., Vol. 3, Arabic Text, p. 136. Matba'at al-A'dab, Najaf, 1976.
- IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, p. 412.

When the suffering of thirst by al-Hussain (A. S.) and his companions became aggravated, he dispatched his brother al-Abbas (A. S.) with thirty horsemen and twenty footmen who went forward until they approached the water at night. As they were trying to fill their canteens, Omar ibn al-Hejjaj and his men stormed on al-Abbas (A. S.). However, al-Abbas managed to turn them back after launching a counter attack and eventually filled the canteens with water and returned back to al-Hussain camp[1].

The following day, the water was used up and the children could not withstand the thirst. Whenever they looked at the Euphrates river, their scream became louder. The most agonizing and painful experience the Imam had gone through was what happened to his suckling infant Abdullah whose feeling of thirst became intensified. It reached to such an extent that the Imam put him in his lap and said to the people, "what is the guilt of this newborn baby to be denied water, an act which is contrary to all laws". Then a man from the tribe of Bani Asad murdered the baby by throwing an arrow at him. Hussain (A. S.) then filled his hand with his baby's blood, threw it on the ground and said, "My Lord, if you have withheld us your Heavenly victory, then let it be for what is good and avenge us from these oppressors"[2].

On the morning of Friday, the tenth of *Muharram*, Imam Hussain (A. S.)

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[1] AL-AZDI, Lut bin Yahya, Maqtal al-Hussain, Issue 2, Arabic Text, p. 99, 1924.
- IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, p. 412.

[2] IBN AL-JAWZI, al-Muntadham fi Tarikh al-Umam' wal Mulook, Vol. 5, Arabic Text, p. 340,1st Ed., Dar-al Kutub al-Ilmia, Beirut, 1992.

performed the morning prayers with his companions who numbered thirty two horsemen and forty footmen. Hussain (A. S.) then mounted the back of his horse and took the Qur'an and held it between his hands. He started to remind the people of his merits, the dignified kinship, the noble position and honour, and then said, "Go back and ask yourself. Is it right for you to kill someone like me, the son of your prophet's daughter, etc"[1].

A group of men managed to join the Imam camp, the most prominent among them were Habib ibn Mudhahir al-Asadi and Zuhair ibn al-Qain. Few others from the army of ibn Ziyad also joined the Imam, the most prominent of them was al-Hur ibn Yazid al-Reyahi, the Amawiyed commander mentioned earlier. Omar ibn Saad advanced with his large army, which was many thousands, towards al-Hussain (A. S.) and his followers. He threw an arrow towards al-Hussain (A. S.) as a sign of the beginning of the battle and proudly said, "Be witness to me at the presence of the Amir that I was the first to throw at them"[2].

Subsequently, Shimr ibn Dil Jawshen, one of the commanders of Ubaidillah ibn Ziyad, launched an attack on the followers of al-Hussain. All those followers stood magnificently as they were fighting the enemy in front of Imam Hussain (A. S.). Hussain prayed for them and said, "May God bless you with the best rewards of pious men". They fought in the presence of Imam Hussain (A. S.) until they

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[1] IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, pp. 422, 423.
- IBN KATHEER, Vol. 8, p. 178.

[2] IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, pp. 427, 428.
- IBN AL-ATHEER, Vol. 4, p. 65.

sacrificed their lives. All his family and companions were killed except for a few. Among those who survived was Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (A. S.), nicknamed *Zainul Abideen*, who was unable to fight because of his illness. It is narrated by Muhammad ibnul Hanafia that he said, "seventeen men from *Ahlul Bait* were martyred. The most prominent among them was his brother al-Abbas ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.)"[1].

Imam Hussain (A. S.) was fifty six years old when he was martyred. This was on the 10th day of the holy month of *Muharram* 61 A. H. (680 A. D.) after the *Asir* (afternoon) prayer[2].

Omar ibn Saad ordered his followers to lift on the spears the disconnected heads of Imam Hussain (A. S.), those of his family and his companions and take them to Ubaidillah ibn Ziyad. When the head of al-Hussain (A. S.) reached ibn Ziyad, he started to beat his lips with a rod that was in his hand. When Zaid ibn Arqam saw this cruel beating, he said to him, "by my Lord, who is the only God and no one but him, I have seen the lips of the messenger of God (PBUH) kissing these lips (Hussain's)"[3].

Men from the tribe of Bani Asad who were camping at Ghadhiria went out to al-

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[1] IBN KATHEER, Vol. 4, p. 188.
- AMIN H., Mawsooa't al-Atabat al-Maqaddasa, p. 69.

[2] AL-MASOODI, Vol. 3, p. 71.
- AL-AŞFAHANI A.F., p. 84.

[3] IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, p. 459.
- IBN AL-ATHEER, Vol. 4, p. 80.
- AL-DAINOURI, p. 259.

Hussain (A. S.) and his companions one day after their martyrdom and performed prayers to them while standing by their bodies. They, then buried al-Hussain (A. S.) on the spot where his present grave lies, whereas they buried his son, Ali al-Akbar, by his feet. They also dug another grave for the martyrs of *Ahlul Bait* and his companions slightly further from the feet of that of al-Hussain's. Then, they gathered their bodies and buried them altogether in that grave. However, they buried al-Abbas ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.) in the place where he was killed which is 350 meters from the tomb of Imam Hussain (A. S.) in the direction of Ghadhria[1].

The martyr's heads were taken to Yazid ibn Ma'awiya in al-Sham with the remaining family of Imam Hussain (A. S.) including Imam Ali ibn Al-Hussain (A.S.) who was ill at the time[2].

The historical references studied the disputed burial place of the head of Imam Hussain (A. S.). Most of them favour the opinion that it was returned back with the rest of the heads with Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (A. S.) to Karbala and was buried there together with his body[3].

Thus, this was the painful end of the lives of Imam Hussain (A. S.), also

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[1] IBN AL-ATHEER, Vol. 4, p. 80.
- IBN JAREER, Vol. 5, p. 455.
- IBN TAWOOS, Seyed, p. 61.

[2] AL-QARASHI, Vol. 3, p. 372.

[3] AL-AMIN, S. M.,A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, p. 578.
- AL-MAJLISI, Vol. 44, p. 199.
- IBN AL-JAWZI, Tadhkiret al-Khewas, Arabic Text, p. 265, Maktabat Naynawa al-Haditha, Tehran, Iran.

nicknamed *Sayed al-Shuhada* (masters of the martyrs), his family and companions. They gave the best examples in the firm will to beliefs, dignity of souls and readiness for sacrifice.

The event of al-Taff has left a long lasting impact on the history of Islam and its echo has been and is still reacting for many centuries. It has also greatly influenced the establishment of the holy city of Karbala.

2.4 History of Karbala from the Event of al-Taff to the Safavid Rule in Iraq.

Imam Hussain (A. S.), under pressure from the Amawid army, was forced to camp with his family and followers at an arid land known as Karbala. Those days, it was surrounded by many villages scattered here and there. Some of them were very ancient villages, with nothing left except their ruins, such as Amoura, Maria and Saffora. The others were either relatively old or recently built such as Nineva, Ghadhiriya and Shfaiya[1].

The villages were known for their fertile land with large number of wellsprings and small rivers. The most important of these rivers were: one branching off the Euphrates river near the town of *al-Musaiyab*, later known as *al-Alqami*, and the other, used to be called *Nineva*, branched off the Euphrates river at a point between the present *al-Hindiya* dam and the city of *al-Musaiyab*[2].

Two days after the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (A. S.), signs were put on his grave by men from the tribe of Bani Asad. Pilgrims gradually started to travel to this place in small numbers. Their numbers increased continuously to make the grave the centre of the city of Karbala[3].

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[1] Al-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, 2nd Ed., Arabic Text, p. 23, 112, al-Matba' al-Haydaria, Najaf, Iraq, 1967.

[2] Al-ASFAHANI, A. F., Maqatil al-Talibiyeen, 2nd Ed., Arabic Text, p. 146. Mu'assaset al-A'lami lil Matbou'at, Beirut, 1987.
- TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 25, 1983.

[3] Brill, E.J., The Encyclopedia of Islam, p. 637, Vol. IV, 1978.
- AL-AMIN, S.M. A'yan al-Shia, p. 627, Vol. 1.

According to historical references, the first visitors to Karbala soon after the event of al-Taff in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.) were Ubaidillah al-Ju'fi, al-Mukhtar ibn Abi Ubaida al- Thaqafi, Mas'ab ibn al-Zubair, Sulaiman ibn Sard al- Khiza'ee and many others[1].

The following year, on 20 *Safar*, 62 A. H. (681 A. D.), the noble companion of the prophet, Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari, who was blind at the time, came from the holy city of Madina with a group of its Muslim inhabitants to visit the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.). In the same year, he met with Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (A. S.), nicknamed Zainul al-Abideen. The historical sources reports that when al-Ansari reached the grave, he said to his companions, "lead me to the grave so that I can touch it"[2].

During the Amawid period, a mosque was built beside the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.) by al-Mukhtar ibn Abi Ubaida al-Thaqafi who rose against the Amawid and governed Kufa after succeeding to kill its Amawid ruler. Next to the grave, there was a *nabk* (lotus) tree used by the pilgrims as a shade while visiting the sacred grave[3].

According to various historical references, Karbala was not inhabited during the Amawid rule. In spite of the desires and eagerness of the Hashimis and their

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 102.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 19.
- TUMA, S.M., Turath Karbala, p. 33.

[3] AL-SADR, S.H., Nuzhat Ahlul Haramain fi Imaret al-Mashhadain, Arabic Text, p. 21. Matba't Ahlul Bait, Karbala, 1965.

followers to live close to the site of the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.), they were unable to build houses or start any kind of construction work because of threats of attack and severe punishment from the Amawids. Check-points were deployed in several places around Karbala to prevent the pilgrims from visiting the tomb of Hussain (A. S.). The pilgrims, however, used to stay at the villages of al-Ghadhiriya and Nineva and used it as refuge and resting places because of their proximity to Karbala. They made-believe that their destination were those villages. Thus, they used to stop there for a short period in order to eliminate any suspicion away from them and conceal their real aims to the check-points. The pilgrims would then secretly leave heading for the tomb[1].

In the early stages of the Abbasid rule, people started to go to Karbala in large numbers, most of whom stayed and lived there. The area began to see progress and building activity and thus became well inhabited with people. It is reported that after 183 A. H.(799 A. D.), the great novelist Othman ibn Eisa al-Kufi was the first to inhabit Karbala with his two sons in the life period of Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha (A. S.). This novelist has written many books among which was *Kitab al-Miyah, Kitab al-Qadhaya wal al-Ahkam, and Kitab al-Wasaya*[2].

Al-Tabari mentioned in his report on the events of 193 A. H. (809 A. D.) that Umm Musa, the mother of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi and the daughter of Yazid ibn Mansour, used to pay the wages of the men serving the tomb of Imam Hussain

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 99, 192, 193.

[2] AL-NAJASHI, Rijal al-Najashi, p. 212, 2nd Ed., Qum, Iran, 1978.

(A. S.). In the beginning of the rule of the Abbasid Caliph Haroun al-Rashid, payment of the wages was continued by him[1].

Afterwards, this city began to fall behind because of a change of policy by al-Rashid at the end of his rule in 193 A. H. (809 A. D.). He ordered his men to level and plough the ground at the site of the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.), cut off the lotus tree and demolish the little mosque[2].

When al-Ma'moun, son of Haroun al-Rashid, succeeded his brother al-Amin as the Abbasid Caliph in 198 A. H. (813 A. D.), attention was once again given to the city of Karbala and the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) was rebuilt. Al-Ma'moun began to show his affection to *Ahlul Bait*, and Muslims began to migrate to the city and to live in its neighbourhood[3].

At the end of the second Hijri century, a river was dug by two men alongside al-Taff of Karbala. One was from the tribe of Bani Alqama (a subdivision of the tribe of Bani Tamim) and the other from the tribe of Darim. Their great grand father was Alqama ibn Zurara ibn Adas. The river watercourse (perviously in existence but later erased) used to pass east of al-Abbas shrine and known as *al-Alqami* river[4].

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[1] IBN-JAREER, Vol. 8, pp. 355, 356.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. A., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 198.
- AL-AMIN, S. M., A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, p. 627.

[3] AL-HASSANI, A. A., al-Iraq, Qadiman wa Hadithan, p. 129.
- AL-MUDDARIS, M. B., Shahre Hussain, p. 203.

[4] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 27.

Between 236 and 247 A. H. (850 to 861 A. D.), the Abassid Caliph al-Mutawakil ala Allah three times demolished the tomb of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and was then flooded with water. He appointed men at check points to look for anyone who tried to visit the site of the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and treated them severely. These measures forced the Muslims to move away from Karbala[1].

In 247 A. H. (861 A. D.), al-Mutawakil was killed by his son, al-Muntasir Billah, who became the Caliph after his father. Muslims once again began to flock to Karbala and establish buildings and markets around the sacred grave. Thus, Karbala regained its prominence in architecture and religious studies. However, al-Muntasir died after a short period and his rule only lasted about six months[2].

In spite of what happened, this period had a great impact on the development of the city and attraction of visitors. In 247 A. H. (861 A. D.), Ibrahim al-Mujab (known as Ibrahim al-Dharir al-Kufi) ibn (son) Mohammed al-A'bid ibn al-Imam Musa al-Kadhim (A. S.) and his son were the first Alawis to come to live by the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.). His tomb is still standing inside the shrine at the north western corner of the hallway (known in his name)[3].

In 279 A. H. (892 A. D.) and during the rule of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tadhid Billah, Hassan ibn Zaid al-Alawi (nicknamed *al-Dai' al-Kabeer*) who was the king

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[1] IBN-JAREER, Vol. 9, p. 185.

[2] AL-MAS'OUDI, Vol. 4, p. 121.
- AL-AMIN, S.M., A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, p. 628.

[3] AL-KILLIDAR, M.H.M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 24.
- AL-SADR, S.H., pp. 36, 37.

of Tabristan and Dailem visited Karbala and embarked upon the building of the shrine. He built a mosque around it but died before completing the building work. The work was then completed by his brother and successor to the throne, Mohammed ibn Zaid al-Alawi (nicknamed *al-Dai' al-Sagheer*) who gave his utmost attention to both the city of Karbala and the shrine[1].

In 334 A. H. (946 A. D.), when the Buwaihids entered Baghdad and became the effective rulers during the period of the Abassid Caliph, al-Mustakfi, Karbala city once again received attention and care, and especially when the Buwaihid Sultan, Mu'iz al-Dawla, visited the city in 366 A. H. (977 A. D.)[2].

When the Buwaihid Sultan, Adhud al-Dawla, regained his control of Baghdad during the rule of the Abbasid Caliph al-Tai' Lillah in 367 A. H. (978 A. D.), he paid a visit to the holy city of Karbala for the first time and gave his attention and welfare to the city. He then used to visit Karbala once every year[3].

In 369 A. H. (980 A. D.), Umran ibn Shahin, the governor of *Emirate al-Bata'ih* (close to Wasit, southern Iraq), devoted his attention to building both the shrines of Imam Ali (A. S.) at Najaf and Imam Hussain (A. S.) at Karbala. He built a hall in the western front of the shrine of Imam Hussain. This is now known as the hallway (*rawaq*) of Ibrahim al-Mujab. He also built a mosque next to the

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[1] AL-AMIN, S.M., A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, p. 628.

[2] LONGRIGG, S.H. and STOAKES, F., Nations of the Modern World- Iraq, p. 62, Published by Ernest Benn Ltd.,London, 1958.

[3] AL-AMIN, S.M. A'yan al-Shia, p. 628, Vol. 1.

hallway[1].

In 369 A. H. (980 A. D.) and during the rule of the Abbasid Caliph al-Tai', Karbala and the shrine were raided by the Amir of Ain al-Tamr, Dhaba ibn Mohammed al-Asadi, who was heading a gang of robbers and bandits. This gang used Ain al-Tamr as the centre of their robbing activities and attacks on cities and caravans on the roads. The instability and insecurity in the country at large encouraged this gang to carry out such attacks. In that year, the Buwaihid ruler, Adhud al- Dawla, sent a detachment of soldiers to Ain al-Tamr to crush the gang and its leader al-Asadi. However, the latter managed to escape before the arrival of the soldiers[2].

Adhud al-Dawla has given Karbala more attention than those who preceded him. His most important visit to the city was in 369 A. H. (980 A. D.) when he ordered the rebuilding of the holy shrine of Imam Hussain. This work was completed in 371 A. H. (982 A. D.). Al-Abbas shrine was built for the first time when he ordered this before his death in 372 A. H. (983 A. D.). Buildings were then constructed between and around the two holy shrines. The city had also flourished during his period and was distinct for its scholarly and religious prestige[3].

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[1] AL-MAJLISI, Bihar al-Anwar, 2nd Ed., Vol. 42, p. 320, Mu'assaset al-Wafa', Beirut, 1983.

[2] IBN AL-ATHIR, al-Kamil fi'l-Tarikh, Vol. 8, p. 710, Dar Sadir wa Dar Beirut, Beirut, 1966.
- The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. 4, p. 637, 1978.

[3] BRILL, Lieden E.J., The Encyclopedia of Islam, New Ed., Vol. IV, p. 637, 1978.
- AL-AMIN, S.M. A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, p. 628.

In 407 A. H.(1017 A. D.), during the rule of the Abbasid Caliph, al-Qadir Billah, the shrine was destroyed by fire which was caused by two fallen candles. This incident created upset in the city. The grave remained in this situation until 414 A. H. (1023 A. D.) when the Buwaihid Sultan, al-Hassan ibn al-Fadhl ibn Sahlan better known as Abi Mohammed al-Ramhurmuzi, restored peace of mind and calm to the people in the city. He also devoted a lot of his attention to both the city and the shrine[1].

In 431 A. H.(1040 A. D.), the Buwaihid Sultan, Abu Tahir Jalal al-Dawla who was the grandson of Adhud al-Dawla, made a visit to the city of Karbala and the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) accompanied by a large train of dependents and his Turkish followers. He remained in the city for a period and gave generously to the people. These contributions had a positive influence on the development of the city[2].

After the decline of Buwaihid rule of Iraq, the Seljuks (*Sālājiqah*) ruled over Iraq. It is not reported that the new rulers took a hostile stand against Karbala or the shrine. On the contrary, they treated Karbala with respect and in 479 A. H. (1087 A. D.), the Seljuki Sultan, Abul Fateh Jalal al-Dawla Melikshah, was the first visitor to the city accompanied by his minister, *Nidham al-Mulk*, and a large

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[1] IBN AL-ATHIR, al-Kamil fil Tarikh, Vol. 9, p. 295.
- The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. 4, p. 637.
- AL-KILLIDAR, A.H., Tarikh Karbala al-Mu'ala, Arabic Text, p. 14, al-Matba' al-Alawia, Najaf, Iraq, 1931.

[2] IBN AL-JAWZI, al-Muntadham fi Tarikh al-Umam wal Mulook, Vol. 15, Arabic Text, p. 274, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmia, Beirut, 1992.

retinue[1].

In 489 A. H.(1096 A. D.), the tribe of Khafaja raided Karbala after raiding Hilla. They caused havoc to the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and committed forbidden acts such as killing people, raping women, robbing and damaging the holy shrines. The Amir of Hilla, Sadaqa ibn Mezyad, nicknamed *Saif al-Dawla*, was initially unable to repulse the raiders. However, he then dispatched an army who surrounded the tribe at first and then killed a large number of them, inside the shrine[2].

In 513 A. H.(1120 A. D.), the Amir, Dubais ibn Sadaqa ibn Mezyad Abu al-A'az al-Asadi, made a visit to Karbala. He was known to be a poet who succeeded his father as governor of Hilla. He was also not in agreement with the policy of the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mustarshid Billah[3].

In 526 A. H. (1132 A. D.), the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mustarshid, seized the treasures of the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) which included money and jewels as he needed them to pay the expenses of his army. However, he did not touch the shrine itself[4].

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[1] IBN AL-JAWZI, Vol. 16, p. 259.
- THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ISLAM, Vol. 4, p. 637, 1978.

[2] IBN AL-ATHIR, Vol. 10, p. 260.

[3] IBN AL-JAWZI, Vol. 17 & 18, p. 174.

[4] AL-MAJLISI, Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 45, Arabic Text, p. 401, Mo-assaset al-Wafa', Beirut, 1983.

In 553 A. H. (1158 A. D.) the Abbasid Caliph, al-Muqtafi Billah, paid a visit to the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) when he was on his way to visit the city of al-Anbar after crossing the Euphrates river[1].

Karbala city was also flourished in particular the two prominant holy shrines during the rule of the Abbasid Caliph, Ahmed al-Nasir li Dinillah, between 575 and 622 A. H. (1180- 1225 A. D.)[2].

Karbala had subsequently gone through a period of neglect and carelessness. When the Mongols, led by *Hūlēgū*, conquered Iraq in 656 A. H.(1258 A. D.), Karbala fell into darkness, suffering from poverty and ignorance. A group of shias met together and decided to write to *Hūlēgū* asking him for peace to which he agreed. Consequently, the cities of lower Euphrates river and southern Iraq including Karbala surrendered to him without a fight. Unlike Baghdad which suffered destruction, pillage and looting during its conquest, this peace agreement has saved these cities from similar damage[3].

In 696 A. H.(1297 A. D.), the Mongol Sultan, Mahmoud Ghazan came to Iraq, passing in his route through the cities of Hilla, Najaf and Karbala. He paid a visit to the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and distributed a lot of money to the Alawis and the residents of Karbala. In 698 A. H.(1299 A. D.), Ghazan once again paid

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[1] IBN AL-JAWZI, Vol. 17 & 18, p. 125.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 183.

[3] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, pp. 40, 41.

a second visit to both Karbala and Najaf. He ordered the construction of a canal from the Euphrates river to the plains of Karbala. This river (canal) was later named as *Ghazani al-A'la* (upper *Ghazani* river) so as to distinguish it from two other rivers built by him in Hilla[1].

In 703 A. H.(1304 A. D.), Oljiyato Mohammed Khudabenda succeeded his brother Ghazan and continued in his tradition to look after the shrines and the welfare of the Alawis[2].

In his journey to Karbala and the shrine of Imam Hussain ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.) in 727 A. H. (1327 A. D.), Ibn Battuta described them by saying "that Karbala was a small city surrounded by orchards of date palms and irrigated from the Euphrates river". He added "that the holy shrines were inside the city and there was a grand school (*Madrassa*) and a corner (guest house) where food was served to visitors. Porters and guardians were standing at the gate of the shrine and no one could enter except after getting their permission. The pilgrims kissed the holy silvery doorstep before entering. Over the holy mausoleum, there were golden and silvery lamps and on the gates silk curtains. The city residents were of two factions. The first one is a descendent of Zheek and the second of Fa'iz. Fighting flared up between them continuously although their forefather is one. The city was destroyed as a result of the disorder they created"[3].

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[1] AL-AZAWI, A., Tarikh al-Iraq Baina Ihtilalain Vol. 1, Arabic Text, p. 376, Matba'at Baghdad, 1935.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 24.

[3] IBN BATTUTA, Rihlat ibn Battuta named Tuhfat al-Nodhaar fi Ghra'ab al-Amasaar, 1st Ed., Arabic Text, p. 233, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmia, Beirut, 1987.

About the same year, the well known historian and geographer, Hamd Allah al-Mustawfi, visited Karbala and described it by saying, "eight farsangs to the west of Kufa, in the desert of Karbala, there exists the shrine of Hussain (A. S.), well known as *al-Mashhad al-Haeri*"[1].

Sultan Owais al-Jala'iri became the Sultan of Khorasan and Iraq after the death of his father, Amir Sheikh Hassan al-Jala'iri, founder of the Jala'iri state whose capital was Tabriz. He went to Baghdad in 767 A. H. (1366 A. D.) to quell a rebellion by his previous slave, Amir Marjan, appointed by him as governor of Iraq. Marjan wanted to rule Iraq independently and, therefore, Sultan Owais dispatched an army to bring him to submission. When the army approached Baghdad, Marjan fled to Karbala and sought refuge in the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.). Once the Sultan knew of this, he sent for Marjan, honoured, pardoned and reinstated him as governor of Iraq. When Marjan sought refuge in the shrine, he vowed to build a special minaret if he came out alive from his ordeal. He adhered to his vow and built a minaret and a mosque around it. He also endowed a number of his properties in Karbala, Baghdad, Ain al-Tamr and Rahalia and its income spent on the mosque and the minaret he built which was later known as *Mi'danat al-Abd* (Minaret of the slave). When Sultan Owais heard of the work done by Marjan in an honor of Islamic rituals and ceremonies, he himself took steps to rebuild the holy shrine. His two sons, Sultans Hussain and Ahmad Bahadir Khan, completed the rebuilding work in 786 A. H. (1384 A. D.) which is still standing to this day. In the same period, the frontal hall of the shrine was built, nowadays known as

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[1] The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. 4, p. 637, 1978.

iwan al-Dahab (Golden Gallery)[1].

Before the conquest of Baghdad by *Timur* in 795 A. H. (1393 A. D.), Sultan Ahmad Bahadir Khan left Baghdad for Karbala with his army of two thousand soldiers. *Timur* dispatched an army to follow him. A fierce battle took place between them on the plains of Karbala in which the Sultan was eventually defeated. He fled to Sham (Syria today) and from there to Egypt seeking the protection of its Sultan, al-Melik-Dhahir Barqoq[2].

In 857 A. H.(1454 A. D.), the shrines in Karbala and Najaf were looted by Ali ibn Mohammed ibn Falah, nicknamed *al-Musha'sha'i*, who was governor of Basra, Ahwaz and its nearby islands. He killed some of its residents and took the rest to Basra as prisoners[3].

In 873 A. H. (1468 A. D.), Uzun Hassan founded the Turkoman state, *Aq-Qoyunli* (White Sheep) which succeeded the other Turkoman state, *Qara-Qoyunli* (Black Sheep). This state ruled the border areas of Iraq and Iran for 42 years by eight Sultans. This state was unable to offer the holy shrines in Karbala and other places any services because of its preoccupation in wars and intense disputes with the Ottomans and at times with the Safavids. However, it safeguarded its safety and security and prevented any attack against it throughout its rule which ended

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A.J., pp. 188, 189.
- AL-KHAIYAT, J., Mausou't al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, p. 266.

[2] AL-AZAWI, A., Vol. 2, pp. 204, 205. 1936.
- AL-JANABI, DR. T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, Arabic Text, p. 24, Dar al-Hurriya lil Tiba'a, Baghdad, 1985.

[3] AL-AZAWI, A., Vol. 3, p. 144.

at the hand of Shah Ismail al-Safavi in 914 A. H. (1508 A. D.)[1].

[1] AL-JANABI, DR. T. J., Vol. 10, p. 248.
- AL-'ABID, DR. S. M., Vol. 10, pp. 14, 15.
- LONGRIGG, S. H., Four Centuries of Modern Iraq, p. 16, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1925.

2.5 History of Karbala During the Safavid and Ottoman Periods.

After the establishment of the Safavid Empire in Iran in 906 A. H. (1501 A. D.), by Shah Isma'il al-Safavi, he sent a large army to Iraq commanded by Lala Hussain who captured Baghdad in 914 A. H. (1508 A. D.). This has put an end to the White Sheep state (*Aq-Qoyunli*) and Iraq became part of the Safavid Empire and, thus, entered a new era. In the same year, Shah Isma'il al-Safavi went to Baghdad and his stay in this city lasted one day. On the second day he paid a visit to Karbala. He gave the holy shrines in this city his best attention and care and distributed cash and other gifts to the inhabitants living in the neighbourhood of the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.). The period in which Shah Isma'il ruled Iraq, was a period of well being, prosperity and peace especially for the holy cities[1].

In 930 A. H. (1524 A. D.), Shah Isma'il died and was succeeded by his son Tahmasib (I) at a time when Iraq was taken over by the Ottomans. Tahmasib sent an army to Iraq, who in 936 A. H. (1530 A. D.) besieged Baghdad and the fortress in which the governor of Baghdad, Zulfigar, was entrenched. Tahmasib eventually succeeded in opening the fortress and killing the governor of Baghdad. When Tahmasib gained power over Baghdad and Iraq, he paid a visit to the holy shrines in Karbala[2].

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[1] AL-HASSANI, A. R., al-Iraqi Qadiman wa Hadithan, 2nd Ed., Arabic Text, p. 130, Matba'at al-Irfan, Sidon, Lebanon, 1956.
- LONGRIGG, S., Four Centuries of the History of Iraq, p. 18, Oxford, 1925.

[2] AL-A'BID, DR. S. M., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, Arabic Text, p. 16, Dar al-Hurriya lil Tiba'a, Baghdad, 1985.
- MUDDARIS, M. B., Shahre Hussain (City of Hussain), p. 304.

Control over Iraq quickly turned to a competition between the Safavids and the Ottomans. After the Ottoman Sultan Salim acceded to the throne in 918 A. H. (1512 A. D.), Iraq was captured by his son, Sultan Sulaiman Qanuni, in 941 A. H. (1535 A. D.). This latter Sultan tried his best to gain the support of the holy cities and decided to support these cities and especially the city of Karbala more than what Shah Isma'il al-Safavi and Tahmasib did. He, thus, saved this city from the danger of floods by building a dam which is still called by his name as *Rauf al-Sulaimaniyah*. In 941 A. H. (1535 A. D.), he also opened a river to irrigate the lands of the city of Karbala which was named as *al-Sulaimany* river. It is presently called *Nahr al-Hussainiya* and it still irrigates the city of Karbala[1].

This river is divided into two branches at the entrance of the city. The first flows towards the north west of the city and is called *al-Rushdiya* while the second flows towards the south of the city and is called *al-Hnidiya*[2].

In 980 A. H. (1573 A. D.), Shah Tahmasib (I) managed to recapture Baghdad from the Ottomans. After he signed a peace treaty with the Ottomans, he paid a visit to Karbala and the holy shrines for the second time. In this visit, he gave the orders to his men to look after the city and the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.)[3].

In 984 A. H. (1576 A. D.), Shah Tahmasib died and was succeeded by his son,

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[1] The Encyclopedia of Isalm, Vol. 4, p. 638.
- LONGRIGG, S., Four Centuries of the History of Iraq, p. 25.

[2] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, 2nd Ed., p. 30.

[3] MUDDARIS, M.B., Shahre Hussain, p. 305.

Shah Isma'il al-Safavi (II), following the assassination of his brother, Haidar Mirza, in the same year. Shah Isma'il gave orders to his men to pay attention to the city of Karbala and the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.)[1].

The Ottomans subsequently took over Iraq once again. Some of the historical sources mentioned that the Ottoman governor of Baghdad, Ali Pasha al-Wendzada appointed by the Ottoman Sultan, Murad (III), carried out restoration work on the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) in 984 A. H. (1576 A. D.)[2].

On 25 September, 1604 A. D., the well known Portuguese traveller Pedro Teixeira reached Karbala. The importance of this event is that it is the earliest known recorded journey by a western traveller with an account of the city of Karbala during the seventeenth century. He described "the various economic, social and architectural aspects of the city". He also mentioned "that the inhabitants of the city were mostly native Arabs, Persians and few Turks. Most of these inhabitants have originally come to visit the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and decided to stay in the city. Others were left behind from the wars between the Safavids and the Ottomans". He further said "that the markets were all well vaulted and goods and merchandise were abundant". He added "that Muslims from everywhere poured to the city to visit the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.)". Teixeira also spoke of "the disorders in the cities of Karbala and Najaf under the

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[1] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, 2nd Ed., p. 44.

[2] ZADA, M. N., Gulshan, Khulafa, translated by NAWRAS, M. K., Arabic Text, p. 208, Matba'at al-Aadab, Najaf, 1971.
- AL-AZZAWI, A., Tarikh al-Iraq Baina Ihtilalain, Vol. 4, p. 178.
- AL-JANABI, DR., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, p. 249.

rule of Amir Nasir al-Mhanna who considered himself as a king"[1].

It is noteworthy to mention that this Amir, Chief of al-Mhanna which is a clan of the Jash'am Arabic tribe, raided Karbala in 1013 A. H. (1604 A. D.) and took over control of the city. This was ended in 1032 A. H. (1623 A. D.) by Shah Abbas al-Kabeer al-Safavi, after his capture of Baghdad[2].

Shah Abbas left for Karbala and visited the shrine of Imam Hussain after his capture of Baghdad in 1032 A. H. (1623 A. D.). He then left to Najaf via Hilla to visit the shrine of Imam Ali (A. S.)[3].

Soon after the death of Shah Abbas in 1038 A. H. (1629 A. D.), Saffiy al-Din (I), grandson of Shah Tahmasib, succeeded him in his throne. In 1038 A. H. (1629 A. D.), the Ottoman Sulţan, Murad (IV), succeeded in taking over Baghdad and the whole of Iraq after putting Baghdad under siege. This Sulţan was bloodthirsty and committed a massacre by killing about thirty thousand shias[4].

This massacre led the Safavid Shah, Saffiy al-Din, to regain control of Iraq from the Ottoman in 1042 A. H. (1633 A. D.). On this same year, he visited Karbala and donated a lot of money during his visit. In 1048 A. H. (1638 A. D.), the

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[1] SINCLAIR, W.F., The Travels of Pedro Teixira, Second Series, pp. 51- 53, Kraus reprint Limited, 1967.

[2] TUMA S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 365.

[3] The Encyclopedia of Islam, p. 637.
- AL-KILLIDAR, M.H.M., pp. 37, 38.

[4] LONGRIGG S.H., Four Centuries of the History of Iraq, p. 74.
- MUDDARIS M. B., Shahre Hussain, p. 317.

Ottomans conquered Iraq once again killing over two thousand Persian soldiers in one of its battles[1].

When news of these losses reached Shah Safiy al-Din, he sent a large army which surrounded Baghdad and retrieved Iraq once again. He revisited Karbala and the holy shrines and distributed large sums of money and plenty of gifts[2].

The Ottomans came back to Iraq again and appointed al-Wazir Qabalan Mustafa Pasha as governor of Baghdad. He visited Karbala at the beginning of 1088 A. H. (1677 A. D.) and bestowed upon the caretakers gifts for their services to the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.)[3].

Another Ottoman governor of Baghdad, Hassan Pasha carried out further reforms when he took over office. It can be stated that Iraq entered a new era during his rule. He visited the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) in 1116 A. H. (1704 A. D.) and conferred upon the caretakers of the shrine and the poor a lot of money. He once again visited Karbala in 1127 A. H. (1715 A. D.) and built the gallery of the shrine of Imam Hussain and also a building opposite *al-Raja'* Gate later known to be as *khan al-Pasha*[4].

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[1] ZADA, M.N., Gulshan Khulafa, Translated by Nawras, M.K., p. 233.

[2] AL-TUMA, A.H.A., Bughyat al- Nubalá fi Tarikh Karbala, p. 73.
- MUDDARIS, M.B., p. 318.

[3] ZADA, M.N., p. 282.
- AL-AZZAWI, A., Vol. 5, p. 113.

[4] AL-AZAWI, A., Vol. 5, pp. 164, 193.
- ZADA, M.N., p. 318.

In 1138 A. H. (1726 A. D.), Nadir Shah succeeded in putting an end to the Safavid dynasty and acceded to the throne of Iran. He later expanded his kingdom by taking Iraq after putting Baghdad under siege. He then paid a visit to the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) in Karbala and the shrine of Imam Ali (A. S.) in Najaf. In 1153 A. H. (1740 A. D.), his wife, daughter of Shah Sultan Hussain al-Safavi, donated a large sum of money for building the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.)[1].

In 1156 A. H. (1743 A. D.), Nadir Shah revisited Karbala, this time together with his ministers and army officers. He paid special attention to the shrine of Imam Hussain and other shrines in the city. He also played a part in improving the city of Karbala and the holy shrines of other cities[2].

The German traveller, Niebuhr Carstan, arrived in Karbala on 27 December, 1765 A. D.. He reported "that date palms were abundant in the city". He also added "that its population exceeded that of Najaf". He mentioned "a wall surrounding Karbala with five gates, but found it to be demolished on his arrival". He spoke overwhelmingly of the shrine of Imam Hussain which he described it "to incorporate a tomb and an open courtyard (*sahan*). The tomb was illuminated in a unique attractive scene with many glass windows inside it". He also mentioned "that a great mosque (shrine) was built for al-Abbas, the son of Ali ibn Abi Talib

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR,M.H.M., p. 38.
- MUDDARIS, M.B., pp. 325, 326.

[2] MAHBOUBA, J., Madhi al-Najaf wa Hadhiruha, Arabic Text, p. 223, 2nd Ed., Dar al-Adhwa', Beirut, 1986.
- AL-TUMA, A.H.A., p. 73.

(A. S.), in recognition of his heroism on the day of *Ashura* in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.)". He then referred to the building of al-Mukhaiyam which he described to be "a vast garden at one end of the city"[1].

In 1216 A. H. (1801 A. D.), while most of the inhabitants of Karbala were in Najaf performing pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam Ali (A. S.), news reached that the Wahabis led by Saud ibn Abdul Aziz with about four hundred horseman and six hundred men on camel had approached the city of Karbala. Therefore, those few who remained in the city moved quickly to close the gates of the wall surrounding Karbala. The Wahabis camped near the city and divided their men into three groups. They then attacked the nearest gate of the city and eventually succeeded in opening it and entering the city. The inhabitants were taken by surprise and started to run in all direction fearing for their lives. The Wahabis pushed their way to the holy shrines and started to demolish it. They pulled out the metallic poles, the fence and the mirrors. They took away with them the precious items, the treasures, and the gifts sent by the Sultans, Kings and Amirs. They also stole the wall decorations and pulled out the golden roofs. During this attack, the Wahabis killed about fifty persons near the tomb and a further five hundred inside the *sahan* which surrounds the tomb. Inside the city of Karbala, the raiders created a lot of havoc and destruction and killed mercilessly whoever they met in their way. They also looted the houses and traditional markets (*souks*). Overall, they had no mercy on either the elderly or the children neither

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[1] NIEBUHR, Carsten, Voyage en Arabaie et en D'autre pays Circonvoisins, Translated by Al-Khaiyat, J. in Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, p. 286- 290.

did they have any respect for either the men or women and no one escaped without being hurt by their brutality and savageness. Some estimated the number killed by the Wahabis to be about one thousand while others estimate them to be about five thousand[1].

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, one of the Indian kings, named Yemeen al-Dawleh Ali Khan (VI), the King of Awhad Kingdom in India, 1213- 1229 A. H. (1799- 1814 A. D.) visited Karbala soon after the raid by the Wahabis. He felt pity for its condition and, therefore, he built pleasant markets and houses to accommodate some of those who were distressed. He also built a fortified wall for the city and added observation towers around it. Thus, the people felt secure and some progress and activity returned to the city[2].

The Ottoman empire began to breakdown and governors declared independence from central rule. This included the governor of Baghdad, Dawood Pasha, who called upon the people to declare their allegiance to him. All cities in Iraq followed him except Hilla and Karbala. In 1241 A. H. (1826 A. D.), he sent a large army which entered Hilla and then headed for Karbala. However, the army could not enter the city as it was fortified with a wall built around it. They tried time and again but did not succeed. Therefore, they put the city under siege for

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[1] The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. 4, p. 638.
- LONGRIGG, S., p. 217.
- YOUNG, G., Land of the Two Rivers - Iraq, p. 123, Collins London, 1980.

[2] AL-KIRBASI, M. S., Da'iret al-Ma'arif al-Ḥussainiya, Bab Tarikh al-Maraqid (in print), Vol. 2, Arabic Text, London, 1997.
- AL-ṬUMA, A.H.A., p. 40.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A.J., p. 238.

four years from 1241- 1245 A. H. (1826- 1830 A. D.) but the city still held out. Then, they cut off the water supply and prevented food supplies from reaching the city. The inhabitants were forced to sign a peace treaty with the governor, Dawood Pasha, and thus the city escaped harm and destruction. This incident is referred to as 'The Battle of *al-Manakhoor*'[1].

When the Ottoman governor, Najib Pasha, took over control in Baghdad in 1258 A. H. (1842 A. D.), Karbala was not following the Ottoman rule. Therefore, Najib Pasha dispatched an army to regain control of Karbala. After putting the city under siege for twenty five days, Najib Pasha forces succeeded in creating a wide opening after firing the wall with cannons. A fierce battle broke out in which the tribes around Karbala also joined to fight alongside the inhabitants of Karbala. However, the Ottoman army eventually overcame the inhabitants and entered the defeated city. These forces then killed hundreds of those who sought refuge in the shrine of al-Abbas (A. S.). Some of the reports estimated the number of those killed to have reached four thousand from the defendants of the city[2].

In 1270 A. H. (1853 A. D.), the British archaeologist William Loftus visited Karbala and was impressed with the road leading to the city by saying, "the approach to Karbala is somewhat more lively than that to Najaf. An abundance of date-trees surround the town, and several buildings erected outside the walls

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[1] AL-ṬUMA, A.H.A., p. 41.
- ṬUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 373.

[2] LONGRIGG, S., Four Centuries of the History of Iraq, p. 288.
- Islamic Encyclopedia, p. 638.
- Mowsoo'at al- Atabat al-Muqaddasa, Vol.2 (Karbala), pp. 276- 279.

imply a greater amount of security from the roving tribes. At the outskirts are several kilns, where bricks of similar size and form to those of Babylon are made for modern progress". He described the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) by saying, "the mosque of Hussain is very similar in plan to that of *meshhed* (shrine) Ali, but cannot be compared with it for richness of decoration, cleanliness, or state of repair. The dome only is gilded. One of the three minarets appear in imminent danger of falling into the court below, the walls of which are in a most dilapidated condition (apparently referring to *al-Abed* minaret)". He also described "the dome of the shrine of Al-Abbas (A. S.) to be covered with dark blue enamelled tiles (*qashani*)" and spoke of the city markets to be "abundant of goods and merchandise". He added, "opposite the *seray*, the houses demolished have never been built, but exhibit a wretched scene of destruction", referring to the aftermath of attack on the city by Najib Pasha[1].

In 1281 A. H. (1864 A. D.), John Ussher, a member of the Royal Geographical Society in London, visited Karbala and was impressed with the approaches to the city which he said "had gardens and wide-spreading groves of date-trees on both sides alongside the canal (*al-Hussaynia* river)". He also described the town of Karbala by saying, "it seemed a place of considerable stir and activity, the streets and *bazaars* being thronged with a dense crowd of pilgrims to the tomb of Hussain". He then added, "no signs of the stagnation and decay which we had hitherto met with in every town we had passed through, were to be seen in Karbala". He saw pilgrim coming from remote places such as India, Afghanistan

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[1] LOFTUS, W. K., Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Susiana, pp. 59- 65, James Nisbet and Co., London.

and Iran. Then he described in detail the gilded dome and minarets of the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.), the walls which he said to be covered with enamelled tiles painted in white. Of the shrine of al-Abbas (A. S.), he said, "It was in many respects similar to that of Hussain shrine"[1].

In 1285 A. H. (1868 A. D.), the Ottoman *wali* (governor) of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha, made a five day visit to Karbala. When he realised that the city was not big enough to accommodate its inhabitant and the pilgrims, he decided to expand it from the south western side. This area was later called *al-Abbassia* quarter[2].

In 1288 A. H. (1871 A. D.), the Persian King, Nasir al-Din Shah who was the grandson of Fateh Ali Shah, paid a visit to the holy shrines of Karbala paid on the invitation from the Ottoman government. He rewarded those neighbouring the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and gave his special attention to this holy shrine. His wife, Anis al-Dawla, donated a tomb (*dharih*) for the grave of *al-shuhada'* (the martyrs). This *dharih*, which is still standing to this day, consisted of one-sided silver decorated latticed window and located inside the shrine of Imam Hussain[3].

In 1295 A. H. (1878 A. D.), Mohammed Ali Shah, who was the Sultan of the Oudh kingdom in India, paid a visit to Karbala and the shrines of Imam Hussain

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[1] USSHER, J., A Journey from London to Persepolis, pp. 454, 457, 458, 460, Hurst and Blackett, Publishers, London, 1865.

[2] AL-KHALILI, J., Mawsooát al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, p. 132.

[3] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A.J., Tarikh Karbala wa Haer al-Hussain, pp. 264, 265.

(A. S.) and Al-Abbas (A. S.)[1].

In 1299 A. H. (1881 A. D.), the well known French traveller, Madam Dieulafoy, visited Karbala together with her husband and said, "it is considered an important shiai centre and incorporates a religious teaching establishment which has a large number of big religious schools to which many students from all over the Muslim world go to"[2].

In 1307 A. H. (1890 A. D.), John Peters, President of the Pennsylvania Exploration to Babylonia, visited Karbala and said of it, "the city is situated on the edge of the alluvial soil, just touching the Arabian plateau. It has a population of sixty thousand, and seems to be a thriving and prosperous place. The newer parts of the city, outside of the old walls, are built with broad streets and sidewalks, presenting an almost European appearance. The old walls are mostly broken down, although there are still gates at which the octroi duties are levied"[3].

In 1327 A. H. (1909 A. D.), Miss Gertrude Bell, the well known British traveller and orientalist and later secretary to the British High Commissioner in Baghdad, visited Karbala and stayed there for twelve days. She described it to be "an ancient town and linked historically with the holy places. It has grown up round

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[1] AL-ṬUMA, A. H. A., Bughyat al-Nubala' fi Tarikh Karbala, p. 77, Maṭba'at al-Irshad, Baghdad.

[2] MADAM DIEULAFOY, J., Le Perse, La Chaldee, et la Susiane,Translated by al-Khaiyaṭ, J., Mawsooa't al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, pp. 301, 305, Paris, 1887.
- AL-KHAIYAṬ, J., Mawsoo'at al- Atabat al-Muqaddasa, pp. 301, 305.

[3] PETERS, J. P., NIPPUR or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates, p. 331, Vol. II, 2nd Campaign, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London, 1897.

the mosque that holds his tomb (the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.)); the town has become a pilgrimage place visited by Muslims all round the year"[1].

In 1329 A. H. (1911 A. D.), the Arab journalist Ammanoail Fatehallah Ammanoail, visited Karbala and was overwhelmed especially with the new city of Karbala which he said that "all its roads were illuminated with oil lamps. He pointed out that Karbala had a vast wealth, a flourishing trade, an advanced agriculture, and a popular and active industry. In Karbala, there was a military hospital, a government building (*seray*) a military garrison, a pharmacy, communal baths, halls, arcades, markets and a British consulate. Its population is estimated to be one hundred and five thousand. The province of Karbala is divided into three cities (*Qadha'*) which are Karbala, al-Hindiya and Najaf. These are subdivided into seven districts three in Karbala: Musaiyab, Rahaliya and Shfatha, one in Hindiya which is Kifil and three in Najaf: Kufa, Rehba and Najiya"[2].

In 1333 A. H. (1915 A. D.), the inhabitants together with the pilgrims visiting Karbala rose against the Ottoman rule and destroyed government buildings. Fighting then broke out with the Ottomans in which the inhabitants came out victorious. Many of the houses, buildings and the two holy shrines were damaged in the fighting[3].

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[1] BELL, Gertrude, Amurath to Amurath, p. 160, 2nd Ed., Macmillan and Co. Ltd, London, 1924.

[2] AMMANOAIL, F.A., Majallat Lughat al- Arab, Arabic Text, pp. 156- 160, Issue No. 5, from 1911, Baghdad.

[3] AL-KILLIDAR, A.H., Tarikh Karbala al-Mu'la, Arabic Text, pp. 28, 29, al-Matba' al-Alawia, Najaf, Iraq, 1931. - TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 390.

Upon the occupation of Baghdad by the British and the simultaneous departure of the Ottomans from Karbala, the adminstration of Karbala city was taken over by *A'l-Kammouna* family represented by Sheikh Fakhri and his brother Mohammed Ali Kammouna. The smuggling of food supplies by these brothers to the Turkish army who were stationed in the towns of Ramadi and A'na angered the British who then captured them in September, 1917 A. D.. They were then sent into exile in India and, thus, the short lived independence of Karbala was ended[1].

In 1919 A. D., the well known British traveller, Mrs.E.S.Stevens, visited Karbala and was impressed with the beautiful buildings in the city. She spoke of the shopping centre and mentioned a roofed market from where people purchase the goods. She also described the *souks* by saying, "vegetable and fruit-stalls are full. Oranges, citrons, lemons, shaddocks, beans, lettuces, egg-plant and other vegetables were plentiful when I passed through, and of course dates of all varieties, and baskets of almonds and walnuts". She said of the shrine of Imam Hussain, "a place where the body of the martyr is enshrined beneath the golden dome of the *hadhrat el-Kabira* (shrine of Imam Hussain), richest and holiest of all shia shrines, and the month of *Muharram* is the time above others for pilgrimage". Then she added, "the second mosque of Karbala, with tiled dome and golden minarets, is the tomb of al-Abbas, Hussain half-brother"[2].

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[1] NADHMI, DR. W. J. O., Thawrat 1920, Arabic Text, p. 343, Matba'at al-A'lamia, Baghdad- Iraq, 1985.
- WILSON, A. T. (SIR), Vol. 1,pp. 257, 258, Loyalties Mesopotamia 1914- 1917, Oxford University Press, London: Humphrey Milford.
- ATIYYAH, G., Iraq- A Political Study (1908- 1921), Arabic Text, pp. 296, 305, Laam Ltd, London, 1988.

[2] STEVENS, E. S. (MRS.), By Tigris and Euphrates, pp. 39- 42, Hurst and Blackett, London, 1923.

Although Karbala city was the starting point for the 1920 A. D. Uprising under the leadership of the grand *marji'* (religious leader) Mohammed Taqi al-Shirazi, however, the city and the holy shrines escaped harm. Both Karbala and Najaf played an important part in the 1920 Uprising and the establishment of the modern state of Iraq in 1921 A. D..

2.6 Karbala in Modern Times: From the Establishment of the State of Iraq in 1921 up to the Present.

Karbala played a prominent role both in the Iraqi uprising of 1920 and in the call for independence from British rule. The grand religious leader (*marji'*), Sheikh Mohammed Taqi al-Hae'ri al-Shirazi, decided to reside in Karbala to lead from there the resistance against the British occupation[1].

In the midst of events developed as a result of resentment of the Iraqi people to British rule and in order to absorb the anger of the opponents, the British government issued instructions to His Majesty's Acting High Commissioner in Baghdad to hold a referendum to establish the views of Iraqis on the shape of rule they wanted[2].

The British authorities wanted to hold the referendum according to their wishes. However, they failed to do so in the holy cities and more especially in Karbala because of the verdict (*fatwa*) declared by the grand religious leader, Sheikh al-Shirazi, and the support to the *fatwa* by other religious scholars in Karbala, Najaf and Kadhimia. This *fatwa* prohibited the Muslims from taking part in elections or choosing a non-Muslim ruler[3].

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[1] AL-WAHAB A.R., Karbala fil Tarikh, Arabic Text, p. 24, Matba'at al-Sha'ab, Baghdad, 1935.

[2] Al-KHAIYAT, J., Mawsoo'at al-Atebat al-Muqaddasa, Section 2, Karbala, by Al-Khalili, J., pp. 335, 336.
- WILSON (SIR), A.T. Loyalties Mesopotamia, 1917- 1920, Vol. II, p. 108, Oxford University Press, London: Humphrey Milford.

[3] NADHMI, DR. W. J. O. Thawrat 1920, p. 308, al-Maktaba al-A'lamia, Baghdad, Iraq.
- ATIYYAH, DR. G., Iraq- A Political Study, p. 355.

A large number of religious scholars (*ulema'*) and tribal chiefs started to arrive at Karbala to meet the religious leader (*marji'*), receive instructions from him and discuss together the situation in Iraq. One of these meetings was held secretly in the house of the *marji'* Sheikh al- Shirazi, to discuss the uprising. This meeting had a profound influence on spreading and continuing the uprising to most Iraqi cities[1].

Few months later, the uprising gradually began to fade away due to many reasons, most of which was the death of the religious leader al-Shirazi on 14 August, 1920 and the second was the offer of the British occupation authorities to the leaders of the uprising to come to negotiation. This offer created a disagreement among the leaders and also came at a critical time when the ammunition was depleting. This had a far reaching influence by weakening the uprising and eventually stopping the fighting[2].

The British occupation authorities, under pressure from the Iraqi people who were demanding independence, had no alternative but to nominate the Sharif of Makka, Amir Faiṣal bin al-Ḥussain, to be the king of Iraq. A British frigate took the Amir to Baṣra to arrive there on 23 June, 1921. He then left Baṣra by train and stopped at the city of Ḥilla. From Ḥilla, he went to the cities of Kufa and Najaf. On the morning of 27 June, 1921, Amir Faiṣal and his cortege headed for the city of

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[1] ABDUL MUNIM, K. Mawsoo'at al-Iraq al-Ḥadith, 1st Ed. Vol. 1, Arabic Text, p. 189, al-Dar al-Arabia lil Mawsou'at, Baghdad, 1977.
- NADHMI, DR. W. J. O., p. 374.

[2] NADHMI, DR. W. J. O., p. 394.

Karbala. However, he was not met by any of the prominent religious leaders. He spent one day in Karbala in which he visited the shrines of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and his brother al-Abbas (A. S.). On the morning of 28 June, 1921, the Amir left Karbala for Baghdad. Three weeks later, the cabinet of the provisional government headed by Abdul al-Rahman al-Naqeeb unanimously elected Amir Faisal as the king of Iraq[1].

On 11 March, 1922, which is about seven months after the coronation of King Faisal, a large force of Wahabis raided some tribes in Nasiriya city in southern Iraq, killed about seven hundred people, looted most of their properties and destroyed their houses. In April, 1922, following this raid, the shia religious leaders called for a conference at the holy city of Karbala during the religious celebration in the middle of *Sha'ban*, seemingly in protest to the raids but the real reason was political. The most important of these was to demand the complete withdrawal of the British forces from Iraq and the annulment of the British mandate of Iraq. Among the most prominent religious leaders who called for this conference was Sheikh Mahdi al-Khalisi[2].

On 25 June, 1922, the Iraqi cabinet of prime minister Abdul Muhsin al-Sa'doun ratified the first Iraqi-British treaty. Upon its declaration to the people, the government elected its first constituent assembly and the royal decree was given

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[1] DE GAURY, G., Three Kings in Baghdad, 1921- 1958, p. 44, Hutchinson of London, 1961.
- AL-HASSANI, A. A., Tarikh al-Wizarat al-Iraqia, Vol. 1, Arabic Text, p. 18, Matba'at al-Irfan, Syria, 1933.

[2] LONGRIGG, S. H., Iraq 1900- 1950, A Political, Social and Economic History, p. 140, Oxford University Press, London, 1953.
- MO'ASSASAT AL-DIRASAT AL-ISLAMIA, al-Iraq bain al-Hadhir wal Mustaqbal, Arabic Text, p. 879, Tiba'at Mo'assasat al-Fikr al-Islami, Beirut, Lebanon.

for this assembly on 24 October of the same year. Both religious and national leaders took a united stance against implementation of this treaty. *Fatwas* were issued by the religious leaders in the holy cities of Najaf, Karbala and Kadhimia prohibiting participation in the elections[1].

When the government attempted to restart the elections on 12 July, 1923, it once again failed because of the refusal of the shias to form election committees. Consequently, the cabinet of al-Sa'doun submitted its resignation and a new cabinet was formed on 22 November, 1923 by Ja'far al-Askari. Out of the eight cabinet ministers, two were from Karbala[2].

On 7 September, 1933, King Faisal (I) died in Switzerland after he went there for medical treatment. The following day, his only son Ghazi, was installed as King of Iraq. His period from 1933 to 1939 witnessed instability, tribal uprisings and a number of military coup d'etats[3].

In 1936 and during the cabinet of Yaseen al-Hashimi, the Arab tribes of lower Euphrates river moved against the Iraqi government and Karbala played an important role in the meetings of the leaders of the uprising and the chiefs of the tribes. The meetings were concluded in the declaration of the 'People's Pact' which demanded people's rights. This pact was blessed by the grand religious

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[1] ABDUL MUNTM, K., p. 206
- AL-KHAIYAT, J., pp. 358- 359.

[2] AL-KHAIYAT, J., Mawsoo'at al-Atebat al-Muqaddasa, p. 360.

[3] AMIN, DR. M. A. & Dr. al-Omar, J.S., al-Iraq fil Tarikh, Arabic Text, p. 682, al-Mejma' al-Ilmi al-Iraqi, Baghdad, 1983.

leader, Sheikh Mohammed Hussain A'l Kashif al-Ghita' and signed by a large number of the tribal chiefs of lower Euphrates river from the cities of Hilla, Karbala, Diwaniya and Nasiriya[1].

Following these movement, on 29 October, 1936, the Iraqi army staged a coup d'etat led by General Bakr Sidqi demanding the removal of the government of Yaseen al-Hashimi. The latter agreed to resign under pressure from the revolting army[2].

On 3 April, 1939, it was announced that King Ghazi was killed in a car accident driven by him. This accident occurred in an unknown and mysterious circumstances. On the same night, it was decided to crown his only son, Faisal (II), as the king of Iraq and his uncle, Amir Abdul Ilah, was appointed as his regent since Faisal was still a child[3].

During this period, senior army officers began to involve themselves in the country's affairs and government politics. One of these army officers, Rashid A'li al-Gailani gained the support of the army and staged a coup de etat against the then prime minister Nuri al-Saeed and eventually succeeded in forming a national coalition government on 31 March, 1941. At this juncture, relations between the British government and the new Iraqi government reached a crisis point which

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[1] AL-DURRA, M., al-Harb al-Iraqia al-Britannia, 1941, Arabic Text, p. 60, Dar al-Tali'a, Beirut, 1961.
- TUMA, S. H., pp. 403- 404.

[2] AMIN, DR. M. A., & Dr. Al-Omar, J.S., p. 687.

[3] AL-HASSANI, A. A., Tarikh al-Iraq al-Siyasi, 6th Ed., Vol. 3, Arabic Text, pp. 203- 204, Matba'at Dar al-Kutub, Beirut, 1983.

eventually led to a war, later known as the British Iraqi war. Demonstrators came out in Karbala in support of this new government and the national sentiment inspired by the Iraqi army move against the British colonialist desires[1].

Karbala also played a role in the uprising of 1948 in which students demonstrators came out in the streets of Karbala shouting for the downfall of the government of Saleh Jabur and denouncing the Portsmouth treaty. During the funeral procession of one of the national leaders, Ja'far al-Jawahri, the police arrested a number of civilians[2].

Similarly, in November, 1952 and during the uprising of the Iraqi people against the military government of Nour al-Deen Mahmoud which declared martial law, Karbala also played a role. This military government, under pressure from the people, was forced to lift martial law and submit its resignation[3].

Following the aggression by Britain, France and Israel on Egypt in 1956, the Iraqi people came out in support of the Egyptian people. Karbala once again played an active part in this event. A large demonstration was organized in which almost all the citizens of Karbala took part and were shouting for the downfall of the Iraqi government and demanding the support of Egypt. This resulted in the arrest of

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[1] AMIN, DR. M.A., & Dr. Al-Omar, J.S., p. 696.

[2] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 405.

[3] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, pp. 405- 406.

a large number of people[1].

On 14 July, 1958, a revolution took place which was an inevitable outcome of the continuous struggle of all sections of the Iraqi people both political and professional, against the ruling governments which were cheating and underrating the destinies of the people[2].

Karbala received the attention of the new revolutionary government and was visited by its prime minister, Abdul Karim Qasim, and a great number of its leaders. Many heads of state and kings of Islamic countries also visited Karbala as it occupies a great dignified place in the hearts of muslims[3].

Although this revolution produced both positive and negative results, neighbouring countries and countries of imperialist nature were worried about the influence of this government on the region. Therefore, they tried their best to topple the government. At the same time, Qasim could not fully control the internal situation. Thus, the way was clear for a coup d'etat which was eventually executed on 8 February, 1963 by a number of army officers with the support of both the Baath party and America. In this coup d'etat, Abdul Salam Aref took over as the President of Iraq and Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr held the position of prime

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[1] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 406.

[2] AMIN, DR. M.A., & Dr. Al-Omar, J.S., pp. 738- 739.
- BATATO, H., Al-Iraq, 1st. Ed., Vol. 3, Arabic Text, p.116, Muassaset al-Abhath al-Arabia, Beirut, 1992.

[3] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 85.

minister. Prime Minister Qasim and his comrades were executed in a savage way[1].

Few months later, Aref himself staged another coup d'etat on 18 November, 1963, in which he got rid of the Baath party[2].

Aref ruled Iraq on his own by imposing his power and ignoring the constitutional rules. Thus, relations between him and the Baath party was strained and each one was looking for the right moment to finish the other. In this tense and hostile situation, a helicopter carrying Aref crashed during his visit to Basra on 14 April, 1966 and was killed in mysterious circumstances[3].

His brother, Abdul Rahman Aref, succeeded him but was known to be weak and his rule was relatively easy going. Thus, the Baath party came back to power by staging two coup d'etats. The first one was on 17 July, 1968, in which they removed Aref with the assistance of his aides and the second coup was on 30 July, 1968 in which they got rid of Aref aides[4].

Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr took over as President. The Baath party then ruled the country according to their views and political beliefs which is fanatical in nature leading them to take sectarian and racial stands. This had terrible consequences

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[1] BATATO, H., Al-Iraq, Vol. 3, pp. 296, 300.

[2] KHADOURI, DR. M., Al-Iraq al-Jamhouri, 1st. Edition, Arabic Text, p. 286, Al-Dar al-Muttahida lil Neshir, Beirut, 1974.

[3] KHADOURI, DR. M., Al-Iraq al-Jamhouri, pp. 349, 350.

[4] BATATO, H., Al-Iraq al-Jamhouri, Vol. 3, p. 389.

on Karbala and other religious cities in Iraq. Restrictions were imposed on classes held by the shia religious schools and also on holding the annual religious caravans[1].

On 17 July, 1979, Saddam Hussain removed Hassan al-Bakr from power and replaced him as president. Saddam adopted a policy of terror and used force throughout his rule. Shortly after taking his post as president, he executed a large number of honourable citizens, scholars and religious leaders from all over Iraq and especially those of the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf including the grand religious leader Mohammed Baqir Al-Sadr[2].

In April of 1980, he deported to Iran tens of thousands of Iraqi families most of whom were from Karbala on the pretence that they were of Iranian origin. This led to a marked change in the demography, social and economic life of this holy city which is considered to possess an important Islamic culture[3].

In September 1980, Saddam Hussain declared war on Iran and this war lasted eight years. The war had a detrimental effect on Karbala and other parts of Iraq and left dangerous social, economic and political repercussions. These repercussions among other reasons prompted him to attack and occupy Kuwait on the 2nd of August, 1990 and thus exposed Iraq to dangerous consequences

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[1] BATATO, H., Al-Iraq al-Jamhouri, Vol. 3, p. 405.

[2] AL-HELI, DR. W., Human Rights in Iraq 1968- 1988, Arabic Text, p. 11, Media Reach Ltd., London, 1988.

[3] AL-HELI, DR. W., Human Rights in Iraq 1968- 1988, pp. 85, 86, 91, 92.

leading many countries of the world to join forces against Iraq. In February, 1991, Saddam was forced to withdraw from Kuwait after this war resulted in the devastation and destruction of Iraq by the allied forces[1].

Meanwhile the people rose against the present regime in March 1991 due to the worse situation in Iraq. The city of Karbala played an important role in this uprising and it continued in this city longer than others. During the attacks carried out by the forces of Saddam Hussain regime on Karbala to quell the uprising, many of the heritage buildings were subjected to savage attacks which resulted in the destruction of many of them and especially those lying between the two holy shrines and those surrounding them. The forces of the regime also wiped out the orchards and the beautiful gardens which were alongside the Baghdad- Karbala road by pulling out the trees, date palms and also removed its inhabitants. These orchards used to supply this holy city and other Iraqi cities with its various types of produce and fruits[2].

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[1] AL-HELI, DR. W., Al-Iraq wa Afaq al-Mustaqbal, Arabic Text, pp. 61, 62, 111, 117, 153, Dar al-Furat, Beirut, 1992.

[2] UNITED NATIONS, Economic and Social Council- Commission on Human Rights- 48 Session, 18.12.1991, pp. 39- 70.
- AL-HELI, DR. W., Al-Iraq wa Afaq al-Mustaqbal, pp. 170- 172.

Chapter III: Development of Islamic Architectural Fabric in the City of Karbala

3.1 Introduction

The architectural features of Karbala is a clear interaction of external influences and local traditions which is a product of the various Islamic periods it has lived through from the beginning of its birth soon after the event of al-Taff up to the present.

The civilizations of Mesopotamia (which the land of Karbala was part), Persia, India and Turkey have all left clear marks on Karbala which can be seen in many magnificent Islamic buildings in the city such as the holy shrines, mosques, *hussainyat*, religious schools, guest houses (*khans*) and the beautiful traditional houses, characterized partly by the spacious halls, large galleries and the wide open areas, to such an extent that this city acquired its own unique architectural style.

The city of Karbala has become in various Islamic periods an important centre from the architectural and artistical points of view especially since the most skilful engineers, craftmen and professionals were brought from all over the Muslim world such as India, Turkey, Central Asia and also mainly from Iran to build the most beautiful Islamic buildings in the city.

The most important architectural characteristics which Karbala is well known for is its original plans and designs which is derived from Mesopotamia and also in using the available local building materials such as kilned clay bricks (*a'jur*) by following the same old building methods previously adopted in Mesopotamia most of which is still standing today in places such as Ur, Babylon and Uruk.

These bricks (*a'jur*) are known for their flexibility in shaping them to make the most beautiful building decorations such as the beautiful *a'jur* falls (*muqarnaṣats*) covered with crystal and pieces of small bright mirror or mosaic tiles, arches, domes, vaults and other building styles by adding gypsum which is another popular local material which itself helps in the rapid bonding of bricks.

The religious and heritage buildings were not limited to the use of local building materials, but other imported materials were used to cover and decorate them, such as marble, colourful stones and rare woods.

This chapter will cover the architectural developments in the city of Karbala from its birth soon after the al-Ṭaff event in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.) to the present day. It is divided into the following three main parts:

- Architecture of Karbala During the Period from the Event of al-Ṭaff to the Ṣafavid Rule in Iraq.
- Architecture of Karbala During the Ṣafavid and the Ottoman Periods.
- Architecture of Karbala in Modern Times: from the Establishment of the State

of Iraq in 1921 Up to the Present.

3.2 Architecture of Karbala During the Period from the Event of al-Taff to the Safavid Rule in Iraq

It can be said that the birth of the city of Karbala is attributed to the event of al-Taff, in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.). Its first stone was the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.). Two days after the end of the battle of al-Taff, people from the tribe of Bani Asad who were living in the surrounding villages placed a mark on the grave so as to make it easily identifiable and avoid losing its location[1].

According to some historical sources, al-Mukhtar ibn Abi Ubaida al-Thaqafi built the grave in 66 A. H. (686 A. D.) during his rule of Kufa and added a brick dome over it. This is regarded as the first dome to be built in the Islamic periods. He also built a small mosque beside the grave, which is considered to be the first building to be raised in Karbala. Al-Mukhtar then built a little village around the grave[2].

This village consisted of a number of primitive houses built of clay and stems and leaves of date-palm trees brought from nearby areas and especially from Ninevah and Ghadhiriyat where there were plentiful of date-palm and fruit trees.

Thus, the first Hijri century ended, during which the Amawid ruled the area,

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[1] The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. 4, p. 637, 1978.
- AL-AMIN, S. M., A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, p. 627.

[2] AL-SADR, S. H., Nazhat Ahlul Haramain fi Imaret al-Mashhadain, Arabic Text, pp. 21, 23, 26.
- A'L-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 20.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 81.

without noticeable architectural development being witnessed in Karbala[1].

In the beginning of the Abbasid period, Karbala started to see architectural development due to the flow of pilgrims and the decision of many Muslim to live next to the tomb of Hussain and also to provide services to other incoming pilgrims. Consequently, simple new houses were built around the holy tomb by using the known building materials in those areas. Since Karbala and the surrounding areas were part of the green valley of Kufa and are located in the alluvial areas of the plains of Mesopotamia, it is to be believed that clay was one of the main building materials in Karbala. Thus, lumps of clay (*tauf*) were used in building some of the simple houses around the tomb of Imam Hussain (A. S.)[2].

Karbala continued to gradually grow until the last days of the rule of the Abbasid Caliph Haroun al-Rashid when in 193 A. H. (809 A. D.) he demolished the tomb which was at the time covered by a dome. He also destroyed the houses around the tomb[3].

In 198 A. H. (813 A. D.), building work in Karbala restarted during the rule of the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'moun. He rebuilt the tomb of Imam Hussain, and house building followed around the holy tomb and thus, the city flourished in

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1 AL-TUMA, A. H. K., Bughyat al-Nubala' fi Tarikh Karbala, p. 16.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 99, 192, 193.

2 AL-TUMA, Tarikh Karbala al-Mu'alla, p. 19.
- AL-SHAHRODI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, p. 15.
- AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Arabic Newspaper, No. 11761, p. 21, London, 1995.

3 AL-AMIN, S. M., A'yan al-Shia, p. 627.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 197.

architecture once again[1].

Lumps of baked clay mixed with straw (cut down from wheat spikes) placed in rectangular mould until regular shapes are achieved so that straight and strongly built walls can be made of it. These naturally sun- dried clay blocks are called '*labin*'. This *labin* was used in buildings and houses of ancient towns of Mesopotamia such as Ur, Babylon and Uruk. Labin was also used in building the first Islamic cities in Iraq such as Ba*s*ra, Kufa and Wa*s*it[2].Clay was also used as a mud mortar and plaster for building walls made of 'Labin'[3].

The houses built of *labin* in Karbala were very simple and consisted of an internal open courtyard called *'sahan'* or *'housh'*. This is regarded as the centre of the house and was influenced in its design by the ancient houses whose ruins were found in Ur, South of Iraq, and Babylon, middle of Iraq. The open courtyard (*housh*) is surrounded by one or two bedrooms and the other utilities on one side and a covered hall (*tarma*) on the other side which is used by the family as a summer resting place[4].

When the Abbasid ruler, al-Mutawakil ala Allah, took over in 236 A. H. (850 A. D.) as a Caliph, Muslims during his initial rule were going to Karbala to perform

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[1] AL-HASSANI, A.R., al-Iraq Qediman wa Hedithan, p. 129.

[2] CARTER, DR. T.H. & Dr. Pagliero, R., Sumer, Journal of Archaeology and History In Iraq, Vol. XXII, p. 65, Baghdad, 1966.

[3] Handbook of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq, Ministry of Culture & Information, p. 256, Baghdad 1987.

[4] Handbook of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq, pp. 197, 256.

religious pilgrimage to the tomb of Imam Hussain (A. S.). The number of houses around the tomb increased and a market (*souk*) was built nearby. Afterwards, al-Mutawakil during his rule, ended in 247 A. H. (861 A. D.), demolished the tomb and all the buildings and houses around it[1].

In 247 A. H. (861 A. D.), during the period of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muntasir ibn (son of) al-Mutawakil, building work once again restarted in Karbala. He rebuilt the tomb of Hussain (A. S.) and gradually houses started to increase again and were built next to each other especially in the area around the tomb[2].

These houses were at low level and their height did not exceed eight yards. This style of building conformed to the special architectural fabric of Karbala city which existed those days[3].

Local clay bricks (*a'jur*) was used during the Abassid period on a large scale for building mosques, religious schools, *khans* and some of the residential houses. This *a'jur* was considered the best local building material in terms of strength, quality, availability and suitability to the environmental conditions of the area[4].

The local bricks in question were exclusively used in building the domes and vaults

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[1] Al-SADR, S.H., Nazhat Ahlul Haramian fi Imaret al-Mashhadain, p. 31.
- ESPOSITO, J.L., Modern Islamic Word, Vol. 2, p. 399, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.

[2] AL-TUMA, A.H.A., Bughyat al-Nubala fi Tarikh Karbala, p. 17.
- AL-MAS'OUDI, Murouj al-Thahab, Vol. 4, p. 121.

[3] AL-KIRBASI, M.S., Da'iret al-Ma'arif al-Hussainiya, Bab Madinat al-Hussain (in print), Arabic Text, London, 1997.

[4] ALLAM, N.I., Funon al-Sharq al-Awsat fi al-Usoor al-Islamia, Arabic Text, pp. 47, 51, Dar al-Ma'arif, Cairo, Egypt, 1974.

in place of poplar and wood made from the stems of date- palms. With gypsum (*jiis*), another popular local material, mortaring of bricks was achieved very quickly. The use of bricks is an old architectural tradition which was known in building work in Mesopotamia in ancient cities such as Babylon, Ur and Uruk[1].

A new architectural stage begun in Karbala with the arrival to Baghdad of the Buwaihid ruler, Mu'iz al-Dawla in 334 A. H. (946 A. D.). In his period, style of architecture in Iraq and in Karbala in particular started to see the influence of the Persian architecture and their various cultures and especially in the decoration of the *a'jur* which reached its excellence during the Buwaihid period[2].

In 369 A. H. (980 A. D.), the Buwaihid ruler Adhud al-Dawla ordered the rebuilding of Imam Hussain shrine and in 372 A. H. (983 A. D.) he built al-Abass shrine for the first time. During this period houses, traditional markets and new buildings were built between and around the two holy shrines. A high wall with three entrances was built around the city in its new plan. This period is considered the most important stage in the architectural history of Karbala since the day when the first inhabitants settled in the town[3].

In 414 A. H. (1023 A. D.), during the rule of the Abbasid Caliph al-Qadir Billah,

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[1] Sumer, Journal of Archaeology and History In Iraq, Vol. 38, Arabic Text, p. 376, Baghdad, 1966.

[2] AL-AMIN, Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Islamia al-Shi'ya, Vol. 11, Arabic Text, p. 356, Dar al-Ta'ruf lil Matbu'at, 2nd Ed, Beirut, 1992.

[3] AL-ZANJANI, I. M., Jawla fi al-Amaken al-Muqaddasa, Arabic Text, p. 83, Mu'assaset al-A'lami lil Matbou'at, Beirut, 1985.
- AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 25.
- Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, p. 260.

the Buwaihid *wazir* (minister) Abi Mohammed al-Ramhurmuzi, rebuilt the wall surrounding Karbala and this was considered to be its second wall[1].

The use of local *a'jur* and gypsum (*jus*) was limited to some important religious buildings, traditional markets (*souks*), *khans* and some houses owned by wealthy people. However, clay (*labin*) was the main building material used in most of the houses built in this and the following periods. In 479 A. H. (1087 A. D.), during the Seljuks period, Sultan Melikshah rebuilt the wall surrounding Karbala which was previously built by Abi Mohammed al-Ramhurmuzi[2].

The city of Karbala did not see any building improvement in the initial period of the Mongol rule following their occupation of Iraq in 656 A. H. (1258 A. D.). However, at the same time the city and its buildings were safe from the destruction and damage which occurred in Baghdad in this period[3].

In his visit to Karbala in 727 A. H. (1327 A. D.), the well known traveller, Ibn Battuta "described it to be a small town with the holy shrine in its centre"[4] (this confirmed that Karbala was surrounded by the wall built by the Buwaihid *wazir*, Abu Mohammed al-Ramhurmuzi). He also mentioned "that the inhabitants were of two groups, the first one is descendant of Zheek and the second of Fa'iz. These

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, M.H.M., pp. 29- 30.

[2] IBN AL-JAWZI, al-Muntatham fi Tarikh al-Umam wal Mulook, Vol. 16, p. 259.

[3] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, pp. 40- 41.

[4] IBN BATTUTA, Rihlat Ibn Battuta, p. 233.

two groups were in continous conflict although they were both Allawis (descendants of Imam Ali (A. S.)) and their anscester was one[1] (this also explains that Karbala was divided into two areas, each area inhabited by one group)".

The first group, A'l-Zheek, used to live in the areas known today as *Bab* (gate) *al-Najaf* and *Bab al-Khan*, while the second group used to live in the areas known today as *Bab al-Salalma*, the Eastern part of *Bab al-Taq*, *Bab Baghdad* and *Burkat al-Abbas*. Another Allawi group, *A'l-Isa* inhabited the areas known today as *Mahallet* (quarter) *al-Mukhaiyam* and the western part of *Bab al-Taq*[2].

In 767 A. H. (1366 A. D.), those who paid attention to the building of the city of Karbala were Sultan Uwais al-Jala'iri and his governor of Baghdad Amir Marjan and also the Sultan two sons, Hussain and Ahmed. These latter two paid good attention to the building of the city[3].

The most important building techniques added to Karbala during the Jala'ri period was the style of decoration with glazed ceramic on religious buildings. This consisted of using small pieces of mosaic and shiny ceramics in covering the facade and the roofs in addition to the variously coloured enamel tiles (*qashani*). This was clearly shown in the mosque and al-Abed minaret which were built by Amir Marjan in the eastern front of the open courtyard (*sahan*) of the shrine of

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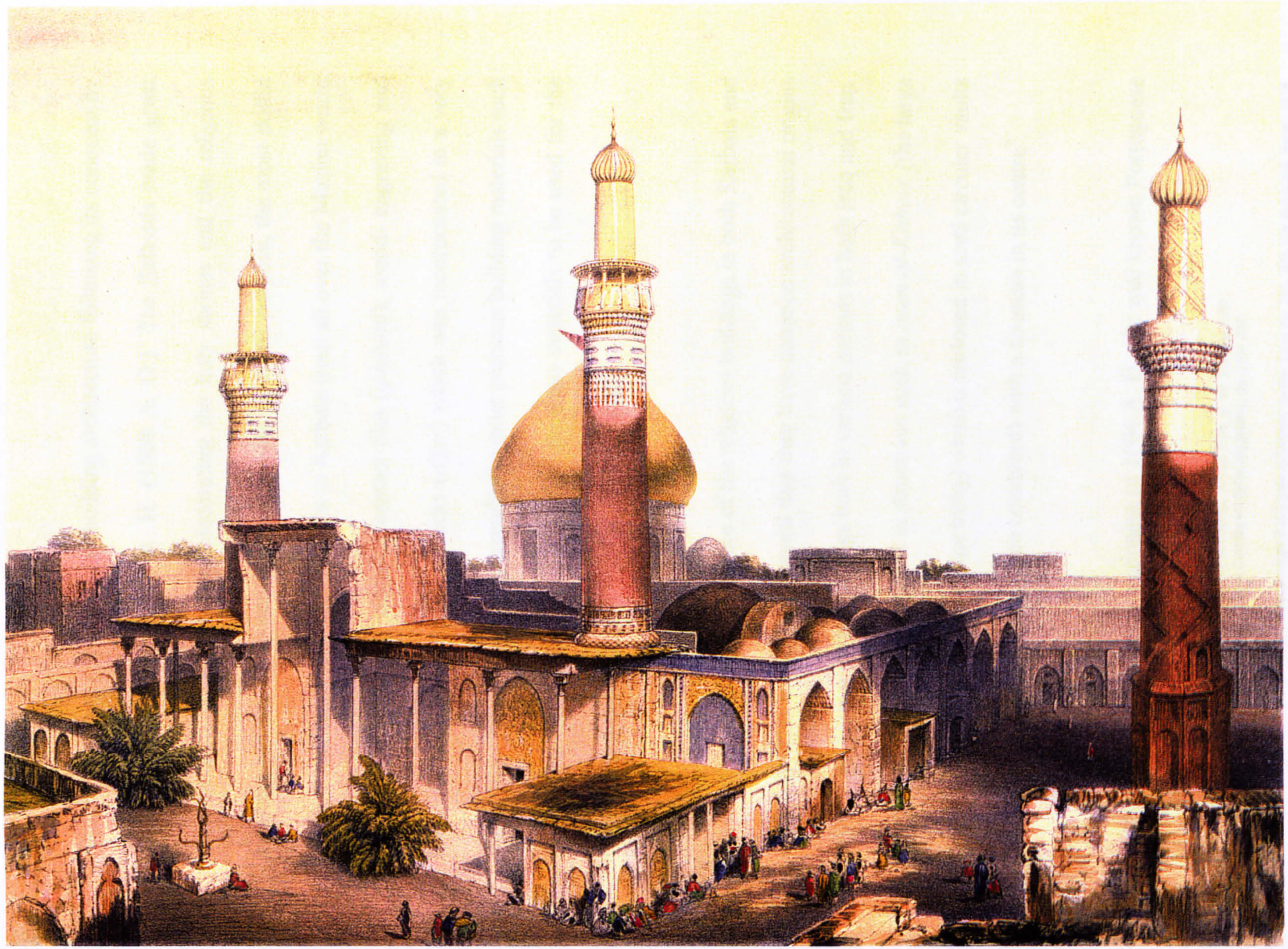
[1] ibid, p. 233.

[2] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, pp. 98- 99.

[3] AL-KHAIYAT, J., Mawsoo'at al- Attabat al-Muqaddasa, p. 266.

Imam Hussain (A. S.) (see plate no. 4)[1].

[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 241.
- A'L-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 32.



SKETCHE OF IMAM HUSSAIN SHRINE IN 1850

BY ROBERT CLIVE / PLATE 24 FROM HIS BOOK: NINEVEH AND THE HOLY LAND
SHOWING THE ABED MINARET ON THE RIGHT WHICH HAS BEEN DEMOLISHED IN 1935

3.3 Architecture of Karbala During the Safavid and Ottoman Periods

Karbala witnessed a new phase of building architecture following its conquest by Shah Ismail al-Safavi in 914 A. H. (1508 A. D.). The Safavids made great contributions by building and decorating the holy shrines and the religious buildings and also set up new houses in the city. For this purpose, the most skilful builders and craftsmen were brought to Karbala from all over the Muslim world to make the beautifully coloured enamel tiles (*qashani*), wood- engraving and brick- building using the local bricks (*a'jur*) which was incorporated in a very skilful way. The Safavids also brought the most precious building materials such as marble, stone, rare woods and other precious materials to be used for the covering and decorating of most of the buildings[1].

An observation of the architecture of the religious buildings in both Karbala and other holy cities in Iraq would reveal that they have common architectural origins which were known in the buildings built in various periods in both Iraq and Iran. These origins are clearly apparent in structures such as *iwan al-Kabeer* (the large hall), *al-Bahu al-Kabeer* (the large lobby) which is enclosed in semi circular vaults and *al-Fana' al- Makshoof* (open courtyard) with a fountain in its centre[2].

In his visit to Karbala in the beginning of 1604 A. D., the well known Portuguese

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[1] MU'NIS, DR. H., al-Masajid, A'lam al-Ma'rifa, Arabic Text, p. 99, Kuwait, 1981.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 253- 254.

[2] ALLAM, N. L, Funon al-Sharq al-Awsat fi al-Usoor al-Islamia, Arabic Text, pp. 204, 206, Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1974.

traveller, Peidro Tiexira, described the buildings of Karbala by saying, "there were more than four thousand houses, many of them well designed in the country fashion, but all of poor construction". He also said "that the city markets (*souks*) are all well vaulted"[1].

In 1765 A. D., the German traveller Carsten Niebuhr also visited Karbala and gave a good description of its buildings. He pointed out that the houses were not of firm construction as it was built of unbaked *labin*. He, however, said that the wall of the city was built of sun-dried *labin* and that this wall had five gates. The city wall thus described is considered the third wall to be built for Karbala[2].

As mentioned earlier in chapter 2.5 the buildings in Karbala were badly ruined by the Wahabis when they raided the city in 1801A. D.. The destruction was especially more severe in the holy shrines, mosques, *souks* and most of the houses around the two holy shrines of Imam Hussain and al-Abbas. The Wahabis also destroyed the city wall[3]. Following this raid, one of the Indian kings made the necessary donations for repairing the ruined buildings. In 1802 A. D., the rebuilding work was undertaken by the grand *marji'* Sayyid Ali Tabatabai who restored the holy shrines, *souks* and houses and also built a fortified wall, with towers and bastions. He made six gates in this wall and were named as follows:

1. **Bab al-Khan:** It is so called because of its proximity to a

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[1] SINCLAIR, W.F., The Travel of Peidro Tiexeira, No. 1X, p. 51.

[2] AL-KHAIYAT, J., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, pp. 286, 290.

[3] ESPOSITO, J.L., Modern Islamic World, Vol. 2, p. 399.

nearby *khan*.

2. **Bab al-Taq:** This is in reference to Taq (arch) Ibrahim al-Za'frani, one of Karbala's notable men who rose against the Ottomans.

3. **Bab Baghdad:** This is the gate through which travellers depart to Baghdad.

4. **Bab al-Najaf:** This is the gate leading to Najaf.

5. **Bab al-Salalma:** Named after a nearby place inhabited by the tribe of Salalma.

6. **Bab al-Mukhaiyam (camp gate):** This is where Imam Hussain and his followers camped upon their arrival at Karbala[1].

In 1842 A. D., during the attack of the Ottoman *wali* (governor) Najib Pasha's forces on Karbala, buildings were damaged and part of the city wall destroyed[2].

Karbala was also described by the British archaeologist Loftus following his journey to the city in 1853 A. D. and said that "there were many buildings built outside the city wall". This shows that the city began to expand during this period. Loftus also mentioned that "there were a number of kilns for brick making on the outskirts of Karbala". These are also signs that brick making began to become widespread during this period. Loftus further indicated that "most of the

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[1] TUMA, S. H., Karbala fi al-Dakira, Matba'at al-Ani, pp. 21- 22, Baghdad, 1988.

[2] KHAIYAT, J., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, Vol. 2, p. 276.

houses were destroyed during the attack on the city by Najib Pasha"[1].

John Ussher who was a member of the Royal Geographical Society in London arrived in Karbala in 1864 A. D. and described it "to have a wall with gates, its streets were narrow and the houses were standing close together, and many were in the course of erection"[2].

In 1868 A. D., the Ottoman *wali* (governor), Madhat Pasha, made a visit to Karbala and ordered the demolition of part of the city wall from the south western side and the city was then expanded by adding another quarter which was named *al-Abbasia* quarter. This quarter was later divided into two quarters, *al-Abbasia al-Sharqia* (the eastern wing) and *al-Abbasia al-Gharbia* (the western wing) separated by al-Abbas street (see plate no. 5). Thus the city of Karbala consisted of eight quarters, six of them were either named after the gates of the city wall or the areas close to them. These quarters are as follows:

1. **Bab al-Khan Quarter:** Located in the eastern part of the city.
2. **Bab al-Taq Quarter:** Located in the western part of the city and to the south of *Bab al-Salalma* quarter.
3. **Bab Baghdad Quarter:** Located north of the city in the direction of the route to Baghdad.
4. **Bab al-Najaf Quarter:** This is located in the town centre between the two holy shrine of Imam Hussain and al-Abbas and

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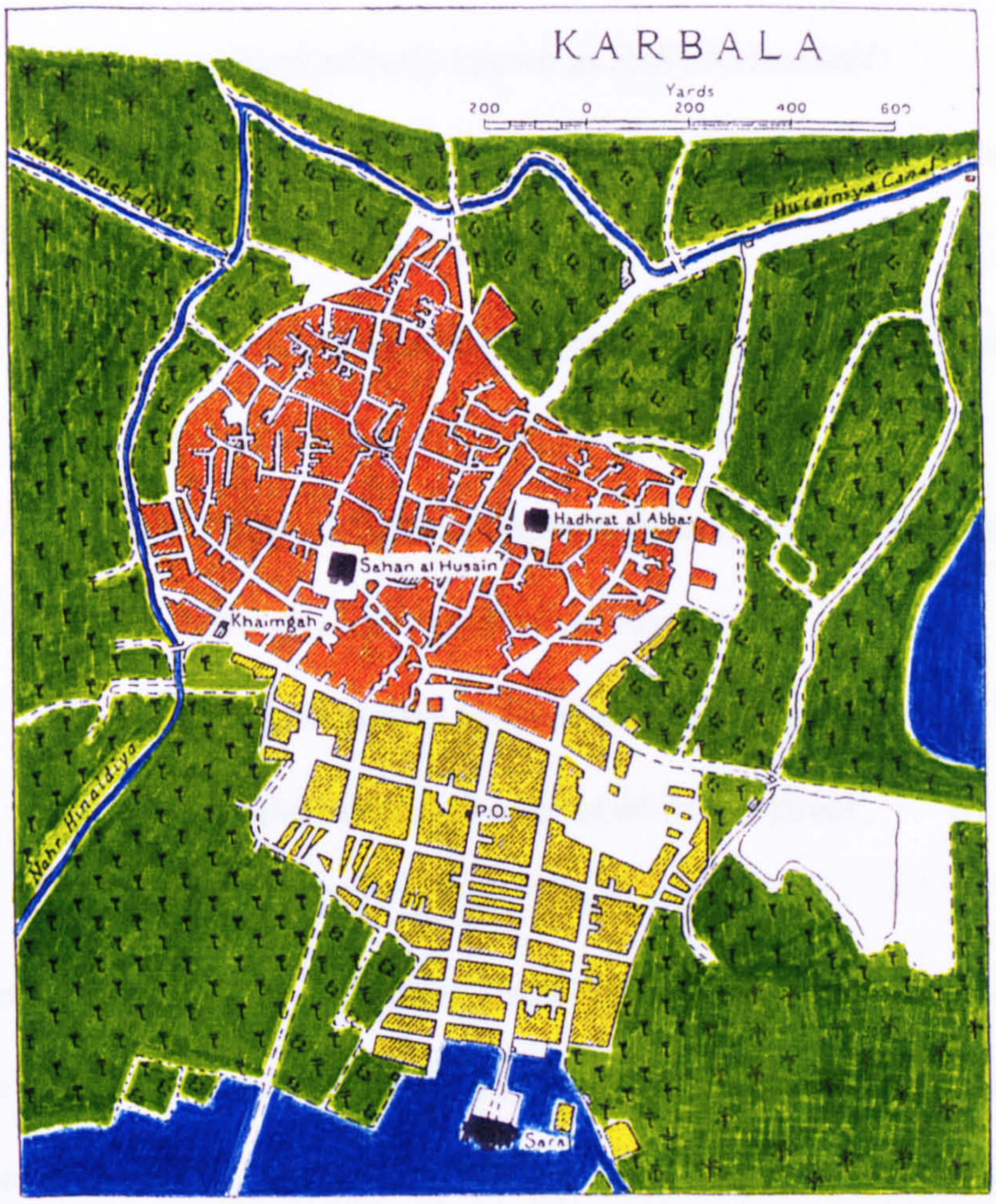
[1] LOFTUS, W.K., Travels and Researches in Chaldaea and Susiana, pp. 65-66.

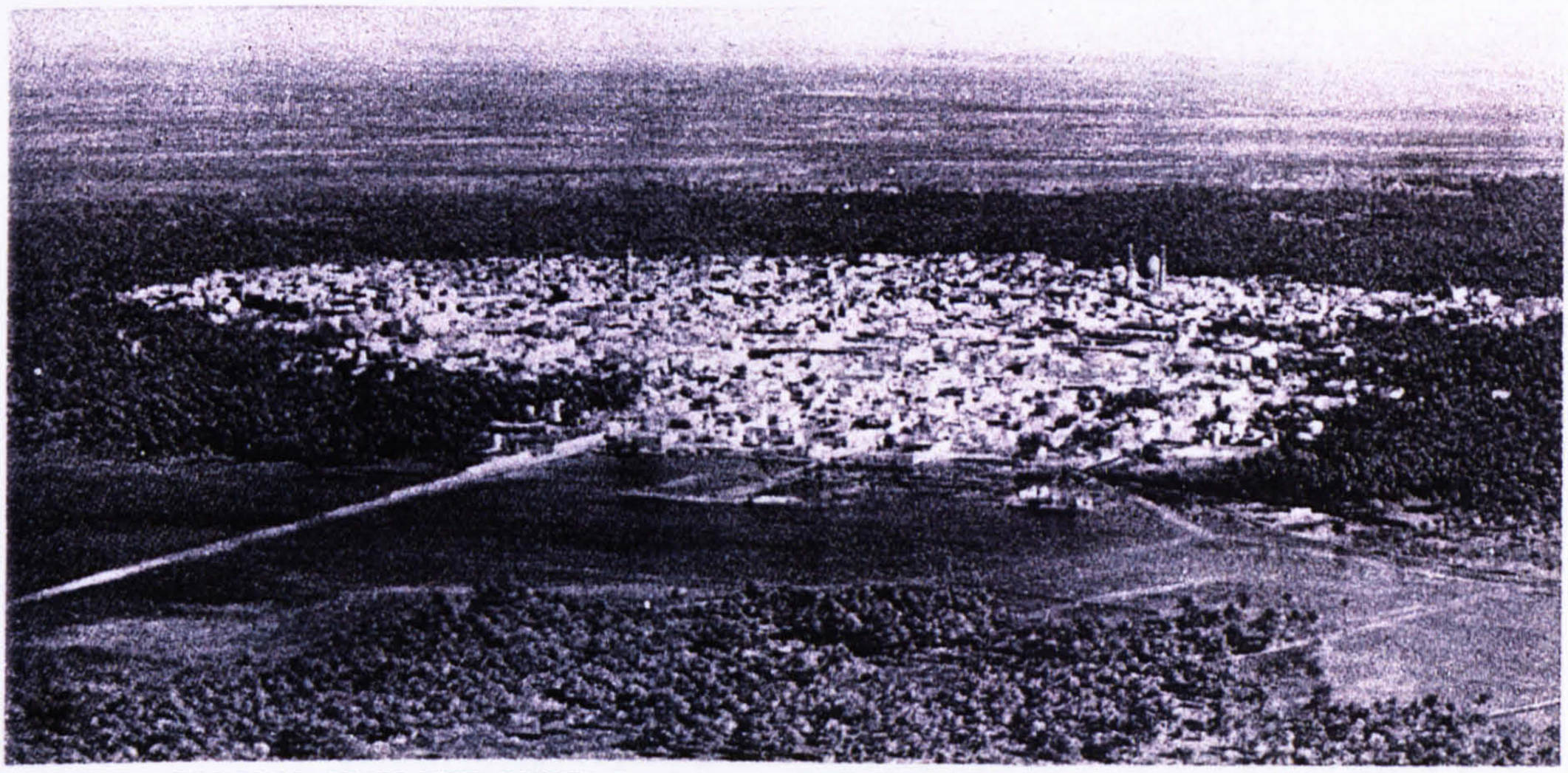
[2] USSHER, J., A Journey from London to Persepolis, pp. 457.



SKETCH-PLAN OF KARBALA IN 1918

OLD CITY OF KARBALA

NEW PART OF THE CITY OF KARBALA PLANNED BY MADHAT PASHA IN 1868



KARBALA FROM THE SOUTH IN 1918. THE SHRINES OF IMAM HUSSAIN AND AL-ABBAS STANDS OUT AGAINST THE PALMS

Taken from 'IRAQ AND THE PERSIAN GULF, pp. 538, 539, Naval Intelligence Division, London, September 1944.'

was previously known as *Bab al-Mashhad*.

5. **Bab al-Salalma Quarter:** Located north of the city and west of *Bab Baghdad* quarter.

6. **Al-Mukhaiyam Quarter:** Located in the western part of the city and south of *Bab al-Taq* quarter.

7. **Al-Abbasia al-Sharqia Quarter:** Located to the south east of the city and east of *al-Abbas* street.

8. **Al-Abbasia al-Gharbia Quarter:** Located to the south west of the city and to west of *al-Abbas* street[1].

John Peters, President of Pennsylvania Exploration to Babylonia, visited Karbala in 1890 A. D. and described the architecture of Karbala when he said, "the newer parts of the city, outside of the old walls, are built with broad streets and sidewalks, presenting an almost European appearance" (he is pointing out to the expansion carried out by Madhat Pasha i.e. *al-Abbasia* quarters, both the eastern and western parts). He also added, "The old walls are mostly broken down, although there are still gates at which the octior duties are levied"[2].

An Iraqi journalist, Ammanoail Fatehallah Ammanoail, also described the architecture of Karbala after a visit to the city in 1911. He mentioned "that the newer part of Karbala city (referring to *al-Abbasia* two quarters built by the

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[1] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, pp. 99- 100.
- TUMA, S. H., Karbala fi al-Dakira, pp. 173- 176.

[2] PETERS, J. N., Nippur or Explorations and Adventures on the Euphrates 1880- 1890, Vol. II, Second Campaign, p 331, New York, 1897.

Ottoman *wali* Madhat Pasha) has wide and spacious streets". He added "that there were beautiful mosques, many hotels, tall mansions and spacious houses". This indicates that the city was flourishing in architecture during this period. He further said "that Karbala was a major and important population centre in Iraq during that period". He then described the architectural style of the buildings of the old city and said that, "unlike the new city, the alleys and streets were narrow"[1].

During the British mandate of Iraq which started in 1917, the Indians held administrative posts in Iraq and especially so in the city of Karbala. Thus many skilled builders and craftsmen were brought from India to carry out building work in the city. The architectural style of buildings in Karbala was thus influenced by some of the Indian artistic works such as wood-carving to make '*shanasheel*' or '*mashrabiyat*'- this is a projected balcony made of wood and built on the first floor overlooking the alleys or streets. During this period, wood-engraving was popular and widespread especially on panels and grids which was visible with distinct features in the interiors of buildings[2].

In 1918, Karbala was described as an old town with a new town or quarter to the south. The old town, which rises slightly to the north-west, is open on the south but surrounded on the other three sides by a wall of brick 20- 30 feet high with some twenty-five towers at intervals as bastions, and pierced by five gates. The

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[1] AMMANOAIL, F. A., X Lughat al-Arab, Arabic Text, pp. 157- 159, Baghdad, Issue. 5, from 1911, Baghdad.

[2] AL-KERBASSY, M. S., Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Hussainiya, Bab Madinat al-Hussain, Al-Markaz al-Hussaini lil Dirasat, London, 1997 (in press).

street or lanes are narrow and twisting, and the buildings crowd round the two great shrines. The new town immediately adjoins the old and is laid out in rectangular blocks divided by an open street 20- 30 feet broad, running north-north east to south- south west to east- south east. It contains the modern buildings such as the *seray*, municipal offices, two schools, a small hospital (80 beds), and police barracks[1].

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[1] NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, Geographical Handbook Series, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, p. 357, London, September 1944.

3.4. Architecture of Karbala in Modern Times: from the Establishment of the State of Iraq in 1921 up to the Present.

Following the establishment of the modern state of Iraq in 1921 and because of the excellent geographical location of the city of Karbala as both a religious and a tourist place, buildings in this city as was the case in other Iraqi cities started to follow new concepts of architecture.

New styles of buildings, architectural work in designs, elements of the western type of architecture were incorporated especially in buildings set up outside the boundaries of the old city. The most common design to be followed resembled that of the British style because of their marked influence in Iraq during that period.

Thus the newly built districts in Karbala started to get rid of the narrow and twisted streets which the old city was characterized with especially in and around the two holy shrines because it was subjected to frequent raids and attacks in the past.

New building materials such as cement and steel slabs and especially 'I Beams' were used on a large scale in constructing the ceilings of houses and buildings instead of employing trunks of palm trees and planks from white poplar and other types of wood. This was especially true in the new quarters which was planned during the rule of the Ottoman governor Madhat Pasha. These buildings were

built again because it collapsed as they were originally built on a salty wet land formed from a previous large swamp which surrounded Karbala from the south and south western side on the route to Hilla[1].

The houses and buildings built inside the perimeters of the old city maintained the special architectural fabric of the city with its low level which ranged in height from one to two floors and is well suited to the simple tradition, the environment and the economic situation prevailing at that time. Their heights did not exceed that of the external wall of the *sahan* (courtyard) of the two holy shrines which was observed as a standard for centuries because of its sanctity. During this period, the city of Karbala was well known for certain beautiful buildings such as the India Ismaili centre, better known al-Buhra, and also the water and electricity building, the government building, the post and telegraph building, some of the libraries, the municipality building located in *al-Midan* (public square) in addition to the old markets (*souks*) and the many *khans* used to receive and accommodate the pilgrims[2].

Between 1935 and 1948, the municipality of Karbala implemented a project to open a road around the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) which was claimed to be for the purpose of easing traffic congestion and movement of pilgrims in this area. However, the incompetence and lack of knowledge in architecture, art and

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[1] AL-HASSANI, A.R., Moujaz Tarikh al-Buldan al-Iraqia, pp. 63, 64.
- TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 96.

[2] AL-HASSANI, A.R., Al-Iraq Qadeeman wa Hadeethan, p. 126.
- TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 102.

intellect of the government officials in those days led to the disappearance of Karbala's most beautiful Islamic architectural monuments which constituted part of the building of the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) which was lofty and glorified for many centuries. One of the most important of these buildings was the well known *al-Abid* minaret which was considered one of the architectural edifice of the city and also the small *sahan* (courtyard) annexed to it, some of the institutions, religious schools and the mosques[1].

This project could have been designed to meet traffic requirements, and the city centre's future development and at the same time avoid the demolition and disfigurement of the city had the officials used proper planning and design to preserve the monumental buildings and the heritage of the city[2].

In 1954, the Iraqi government started construction work to build the new *al-Iskan* quarter which was allocated for the civil servants working in Karbala. This quarter lies about 3 kilometres to the south west of the city centre[3].

In 1955, the *Mutassarif* (governor) of Karbala, Hussain al-Sa'ad, set up the new *al-Hussain* quarter which lies about 3 kilometres to the south west of the city centre on the new Karbala- Najaf Road and adjoining the *al-Iskan* quarter. This new quarter is considered one of the most important modern quarters still in

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 240, 244, 246.
- A'L-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, pp. 35, 36.

[2] AL-ANSARI, R., Majallat al-Noor, Issue No. 39, Arabic Text, p. 6, October, London, 1993.

[3] Archives of the Municipality of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq, 1995.

existence in Karbala today. It was designed in a circular shape with the tourist Karbala hotel in the centre and surrounded by gardens from all sides[1].

In the sixties, other new quarters were set up, some of these are[2]:

- *Al-Mu'almin* quarter, built in 1960 and lies about 4 kilometres to the west of the city centre.

- *Al-Baladiya* quarter, built in 1961 and lies in the area between the road leading to the *al-Hussain* quarter and the old hospital road.

- *Al-Abbas* quarter, built in 1964 and lies about 3 kilometres to the city centre and on the Karbala- Baghdad new road.

In the seventies and as result of the increase in population of the city of Karbala and the migration of the people living in the surrounding areas of Karbala and nearby towns and villages, the city started to expand horizontally outside its old boundaries. Thus further new quarters were built in the south western side. These new quarters are[3]:

- *Al-Hur*, *al-Amil*, *al-Naqeeb* and *al-Islah al-Zira'i* quarters all built in 1970.

- *Ramadhan*, *al-Usra*, *al-Mulhaq*, *al-Sihha* and *al-Bunook* quarters, all built in 1975.

- *Al-Muwadhafin* quarter, built in 1976.

- *Saif Sa'ad* quarter, built in 1977.

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[1] Archives of the Municipality of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq, 1955.

[2] Archives of the Municipality of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq, 1995.

[3] Archives of the Municipality of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq, 1995.

- *Al-Uruba* and *al-Thawra* quarters, built in 1978.

In 1977, work started on a project to build the 40 metre wide Pedestrian street linking the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and that of his brother al-Abbas (A. S.) which was completed in 1980. This project contributed to the distortion of the beautiful features of the city centre to a large extent. This shows the indifference and the apathy of the government of Iraq towards preserving the cultural origins of the Islamic environment by which the holy city of Karbala is distinguished because of its architectural fabric. Many of the city's prominent Islamic buildings were destroyed such as the well known *souk al-Hussain* (only partly), *al-Safi* Mosque, *Badkuba* religious school, *Hassan Khan* school, many of the beautiful traditional houses and many other buildings. Buildings were constructed on both sides of the this street in a chaotic manner and without proper planning or prior study and also without appreciation of the Islamic architectural features of this city (see plate no. 6)[1].

A further new wave of migration of people from the countryside and neighbouring villages and also from other Iraqi towns occurred during the Iran- Iraq war in 1980, thus raising the population of the city of Karbala in 1985 to 184, 574[2].

While the population of city of Karbala was reported in the annual bulletin of the

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Majallat al-Noor, Issue No. 39, p. 6, October, London, 1993.

[2] Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 6, p. 741.

PEDESTRIAN STREET BETWEEN THE TWO HOLY SHRINES IN 1980 SHOWING IMAM HUSSAIN (A.S.) SHRINE.

PEDESTRIAN STREET BETWEEN THE TWO HOLY SHRINES IN 1980 SHOWING AL-ABBAS (A.S.) SHRINE.

Province of Karbala in 1971 to be 102, 213[1]. Thus, the overall per cent increase in 14 years is about 81%. On the other hand, widening of some of the city streets such as *Bab al-Qibla* (also known as *Abu al-Fahad*) (see plate no. 7), *al-Sidra*, *al-Jumhouria* and opening new streets such as *Bab al-Sultania* and *al-Muheet* (Ring Road) has resulted in the demolition of residential areas. Thus, the size of the city of Karbala was no longer big enough to accommodate the increasing number of inhabitants and also there was no room to build further new housing schemes within it. Therefore, the city once again expanded horizontally outside both its old and new boundaries in order to meet these additional requirements, especially in the western, southern and south western direction and new quarters were set up. These were[2]:

- *Al-Intisar* and *al-Bahadiliya* quarters, built in 1980.

- Both sectors of *al-Askari* quarter (one inside al-Hur area and the other behind *al-Taqa* area), built in 1980 and 1983.

- *Al-Dhubbat* and *al-Shuhada'* quarters, built in 1983.

- *Al-Salam* quarter, built in 1989.

- *Al-Sumoud* quarter, built in 1990.

- *Al-Tahaddi* and *Ta'awin* quarters, built in 1992.

Most of quarters built in Karbala lacked the essential services such as health, public transport, council services, markets, schools, social services, and mosques. The buildings in these new quarters are different from those in the old city in that they were built in a modern architectural style. The builders were overzealous in

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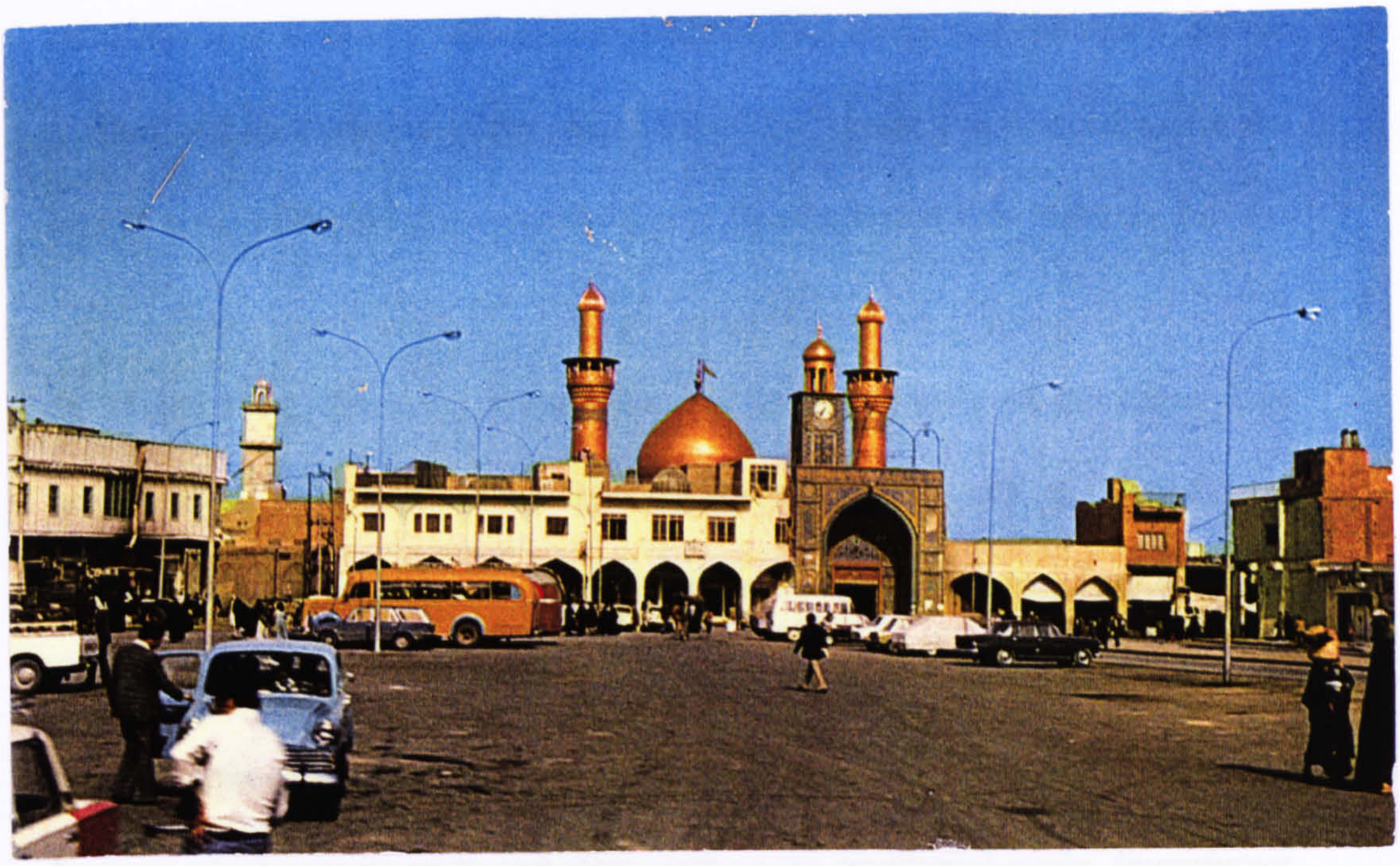
[1] Adhwa' Kashifa ala Muhafadhat Karbala, Bulletin of the Province of Karbala, Arabic Text, p. 25, Karbala, Iraq, 1971.

[2] Archives of the Municipality of Karbala, Karbala, Iraq, 1995.
- TUMA, S. H., Karbala fi al-Dakira, pp. 64- 65.



BAB AL- QIBLA STREET - 1970.

BAB AL- QIBLA STREET - 1995.

imitating the modern style without due consideration to the original styles and the architectural environment of the city. This lack of vision was responsible for the loss of some of the architectural features in these quarters (see plate no. 8).

In March 1991, following the uprising of the Iraqi people on the ruling Iraqi government, the government forces attacked the holy city of Karbala and completely destroyed the city centre (especially the area linking the two holy shrines and buildings around it). The most important Islamic monuments were levelled to the ground and thus the city has lost many of its valuable architectural heritage which was its pride and glory such as the traditional *souks*, *hussainiyat*, institutions, religious schools, *khans*, *kaiseriyats* (shopping arcades) and the beautiful traditional houses[1].

Thus, the area between the two holy shrines was converted to a huge empty yard, 160 metres wide by 300 metres length, and surrounded by other demolished buildings (see plate no. 9)[2].

In the beginning of 1997, Karbala municipality paved the open area between the two holy shrines with concrete, and planted it with date palm trees. Planning permission without prior planning and architectural study of the site, was given to the owners of the lands around this area to build it with hotels and other types of accommodation for pilgrims. This has resulted in the seting of buildings which are

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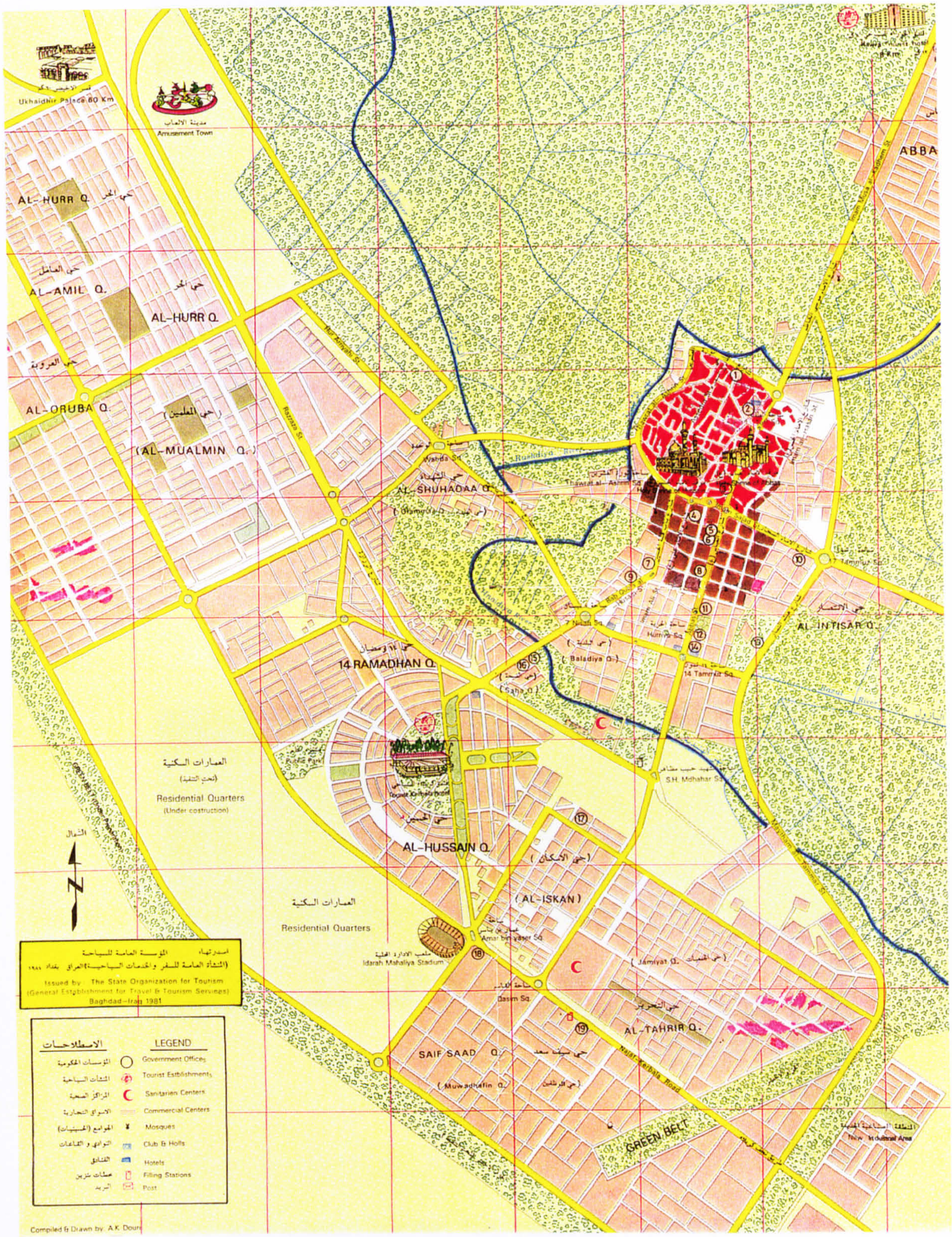
[1] UNITED NATION, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, 49 Session, pp. 52, 53, 06/01/1993.

[2] Archives of the Municipality of Karbala, Site Plan of the City Centre of Karbala, 1992.

not consistent with the building style of the two holy shrines and the architectural fabric of the old city.



OLD CITY OF KARBALA.

THE PART OF THE CITY OF KARBALA PLANNED BY MADHAT PASHA IN 1868.

NEW QUARTERS IN KARBALA.

THE OPEN AREA LINKING THE TWO HOLY SHRINES AFTER THE DESTRUCTION IN 1991 SHOWING IMAM HUSSAIN (A.S.) SHRINE.

THE OPEN AREA LINKING THE TWO HOLY SHRINES AFTER THE DESTRUCTION IN 1991 SHOWING AL-ABBAS (A.S.) SHRINE.

Chapter IV: Architectural Development of the Holy Shrines and Other Religious Buildings

4.1 Introduction

The holy city of Karbala is well known for its religious buildings and cultural values. These buildings are characterised with the richness of Islamic features. Examples of which are: the two holy shrines of Imam Hussain and al-Abbas, smaller shrines, mosques, *Hussainiyat*, *maqamat* (sanctuaries) and religious schools which played important roles in the cultural and social life of the city.

The twin holy shrines of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and of his brother Al-Abbas (A. S.) are considered to be the most important buildings of Islamic architecture in this city where artistic skills are displayed with golden and silvery decorations, beautiful combinations of glazed ceramic decoration and pieces of small bright mirror which decorate the interiors of both shrines adding to their splendour and beauty. The *muqarnaṣats* were used as important architectural decoration especially inside the shrines and also at their entrances.

The holy shrines are distinguished by their main architectural features such as their, high walls and gates and the use of the most precious building materials such as marble, coloured stones and rare wood.

Another architectural feature which distinguishes the religious buildings and especially the holy shrines in Karbala is the use of local building materials such as the clay brick (*a'jur*) and the colourful enamelled tiles (*qashani*) which Karbala is well known for as a leading producer and thus it is also known as Karbala Tiles. These tiles are used in the decorating of the domes, minarets, walls, entrances and other locations. The use of *qashani* tiles in such buildings is only used as a building material for it is characterised with hardness and brilliance. Such natural properties cannot be found except in marble and coloured stone which are not naturally available in Karbala or other cities in Iraq.

The holy shrines of the city of Karbala and especially the two shrines of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and his brother al-Abbas (A. S.) are distinct for their prestige, splendor and significant domes and minarets. These minarets and domes are gilded and covered with the beautiful *qashani* which is engraved with calligraphic writings of verses from the holy Qur'an.

This chapter will concentrate on the architecture of the holy shrines and other religious buildings. It is divided into the following parts:

- Imam Hussain Shrine.
- Al-Abbas Shrine.
- Smaller Shrines, Maqams (Sanctuaries) and al-Mukhaiyam.
- Mosques
- Hussainiyat.

- Religious Schools.

4.2 Imam Hussain Shrine

The holy shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.), also known as *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*, is considered as one of the most important shrine and landmark in the city of Karbala. It includes the tomb of Imam Hussain (prophet Muhammad's grandson), that of his son and another for his companions.

The architecture of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* has seen various stages of development in its long history starting from the event al-Taff in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.) to our present day. The following are the most important stages[1]:

The First Construction

The first construction to be raised on the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.) was built by al-Mukhtar ibn Ubaida al-Thaqafi in 66 A. H. (686 A. D.). He built a tomb over the grave and covered it with a clay brick dome. He also built beside the tomb a mosque with two gates, one on the southern side and the other in the eastern side. This dome is considered the first one to be built in the Islamic period[2].

However, other historians report that the dome of Masjid Qubbat al-Sakhra in

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 21, No. 12146, London, 28/5/1996.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, M.H.M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 20.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A.J.,Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 81.
- AL-ANSARI, R., Majjalat al-Noor, p. 3, Issue No.61, London, 1996.

Jerusalem, built by the Amawid Caliph Abdul Malik ibn Marwan in 72 A. H. (691 A. D.), is the first dome to be erected in the Islamic period[1].

This conflicting conclusion is perhaps because these historians could not carry out a comprehensive literature survey or may be due to their little knowledge in the architectural history of the city of Karbala.

This domed structure was still standing in place up to the period of the Abbasid Caliph Haroun al Rashid. However, at the end of his rule, he demolished and levelled it to the ground and finally ploughed the location of the grave in 193 A. H. (809 A. D.)[2].

The Second Construction

In 198 A. H. (813 A. D.), the second construction was raised on the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.) by the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'moun. An elevated building of clay brick and gypsum was built above the grave and remained there until 236 A. H. (850 A. D.)[3].

When the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakil assumed power, he demolished the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) three times during his rule in the years 236 A. H. (850

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[1] AL-WELEY, SHEIKH T., al-Masajid fil Islam, 1st Ed., Arabic Text, p. 277, Dar al-Ilm lil Malayeen, Beirut, 1988.

[2] AL-SADR, S.H., Nazhat Ahlul Haramain fi Imarat al-Mashhadain, p. 27.
- AL-AMIN, S. M., A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, p. 627.

[3] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A.J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 162.

A. D.), 237 A. H. (851 A. D.), and 247 A. H. (861 A. D.)[1].

The Third Construction

The shrine was rebuilt for the third time in 247 A. H. (861 A. D.) by the Abbasid Caliph al-Muntasir Billah who is the son of al-Mutawakil. He erected on the site of the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.) a building covered by a dome built of clay brick and gypsum. This building collapsed in 273 A. H. (887 A. D.) and the tomb remained in an exposed position for the following ten years[2].

The Fourth Construction

The holy shrine was renewed for the fourth time by the two brothers, al-Hassan ibn Zaid who was the king of Tabristan and Dailam, nicknamed "*al Dai' al-Kabeer*", and Mohammed ibn Zaid, nicknamed "*al-Dai' al-Sagheer*". Both brothers were also known as the fetchers of stones and are descendants of Imam Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.). They built a tomb over the grave and surmounted by a lofty dome built of clay brick and gypsum. Around this building, two sheds surrounded by a wall were also built and used as a mosque. This building was completed in 283 A. H. (896 A. D.)[3].

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[1] IBN JAREER, Tarikh al-Tabari, Tarikh al-Rusul wal Muluk, Vol. 9, p. 185.
- AL-AMIN, S. M., A'yan al-Shia, Vol. 1, p. 628.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J, Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 164, 168.
- AL-HASSANI, A. R., Al-Iraq Qadeeman wa Hadeethan, p. 129.

[3] AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, pp. 24, 25.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 168.
- AL-SADR, S. H., Nazhat Ahlul Haramain fi Imarat al-Mashhadain, p. 32.

The Fifth Construction

The shrine building of Imam Hussain (A. S.) was renewed for the fifth time by Adhud al-Dawla al-Buwaihi between 369 and 371 A. H. (980- 982 A. D.). He built over the tomb a lofty dome of clay brick and gypsum and added halls (*rawaqs*) around the building with a gate on each side. He decorated the interior of the shrine with red teakwood and surrounded the *hadhra* with a large open courtyard (*sahan*) and this was surrounded by a high wall with an entrance on each of its four sides. Also, during the rule of the Adhud al-Dawla, the Amir of the Bata'ih in southern Iraq, Umran ibn Shaheen, built a mosque and another *rawaq* connected to the shrine in the western side of the *hadhra* and was later named after him. It is now known as *rawaq Sayed Ibrahim al-Mujab*[1].

The Sixth Construction

The shrine building of Imam Hussain (A. S.) was renewed for the sixth time at the beginning of the sixth Hijri century as the building built by Adhud al-Dawla collapsed in 407 A. H. (1017 A. D.) after it caught fire following the fall of two large candles. This fire destroyed both the dome and the halls. The shrine remained in this state until the Buwaihid *wazir* (minister), al-Hassan ibn al-Fadhl al-Ramhurmuzi, renewed it once again. He used clay brick and gypsum as materials of construction and built a wall around the shrine. This building was

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[1] ISLAMIC ENCYCLOPEDIA, Vol. 4, p. 637.
- Naval Intelligence Division, Iraq & the Persian Gulf, p. 537.
- AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, pp. 26, 28.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 39.

described by the well known traveller ibn Battuta in his journey to Karbala in 727 A. H. (1327 A. D.)[1].

The Seventh Construction

In 767 A. H. (1366 A. D.), Imam Hussain shrine was renewed for the seventh time by Sultan Uwais ibn Sheikh Hassan al-Jalairi. He put up a lofty building over the grave built of local clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum and raised a dome, also built of *a'jur*, and two minarets at the forefront of the *hadhra*. He also built the frontal gallery (*iwan*) of the *hadhret* which is also known as the *iwan al-Dahab* (The Golden Gallery). In 786 A. H. (1384 A. D.), his two sons, Sultan Hussain and Sultan Ahmad, completed the work started by their father. This is now basically the building standing today[2].

In 767 A. H. (1366 A. D.), Aminul Din Marjan, the governor (*wali*) of Baghdad appointed by Sultan Uwais, built a minaret which was later known as Mi'thanat al-Abd (the minaret of the slave). This was built of local clay brick (*a'jur*), and gypsum and was situated in the eastern side of the open courtyard of the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.). He also built a small mosque next to it[3].

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[1] IBN AL-ATHIR, al-Kamil fil Tarikh, Vol. 9, p. 295.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 180.
- KHULUSI, DR. S., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa Edited by J.Al-Khalili, Karbala Section, p. 199.

[2] AL-TUMA, A. H. A., Bugyat al-Nubala' fi Tarikh Karbala, pp. 70- 71.
- AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, pp. 32- 33.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 43.

[3] MUDDARIS, M. B., Shahre Hussain, pp. 289- 290.
- AL KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 34.

Repairs, improvements and additions were made to the shrine building in different periods, especially during the rules of the Safavids, Ottomans and Qajaris. In 914 A. H. (1508 A. D.), Shah Ismail al-Safavi offered a gift consisting of a raised chest with latticed window on four sides, known as *al-dharih*, designed with silver and erected above the grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.). He also ordered the gilding of the borders around the exterior of this *al-dharih*. This was the first time gold was used in decorating these buildings[1].

In 948 A. H. (1576 A. D.), following instructions from the Ottoman Sultan Murad (III), the Ottoman *wali* (governor), Ali Pasha al-Wendzada, renewed the building of the mosque (i.e. the shrine) of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and its illuminated dome[2].

In 1048 A. H. (1638 A. D.), the Ottoman Sultan, Murad (IV), ordered the restoration of the dome of the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.). It was built of clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum and then plastered from the outside with gypsum[3].

During the Qajari rule, the dome of the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.) was gilded three times. The first time was in 1207 A. H. (1793 A. D.) by Sultan Mohammed Agha Khan, founder of the Qajari dynasty. The second gilding was during the rule of the Qajari Sultan Fateh Ali Shah in 1232 A. H. (1817 A. D.). His wife ordered the gilding of the two minarets up to its middle position (also known as al-hawdh

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[1] AL-AZAWI, A., Tarikh al-Iraq baina Ihtilalain, 1st Ed., Vol. 3, Arabic Text, P. 316, Matba' at-Tafayudh al-Ahlia, Baghdad, 1939.

[2] Gulsha Khulafa, p. 208.

[3] AL-KHAIYAT, A. H., Tarikh al-Rawdha al-Hussainiya, Arabic Text, p. 10, Dar al-Kashaf lil Nesher wal Tiba'a wal Tawzee', 1957.

position). In 1276 A. H. (1860 A. D.), the Qajari Sulṭan, Nasir al-Din Shah, ordered the renewal of the covering of the shrine, change its gilded tiles and the gilding of the dome for the third time. He also built his large gallery (*iwan*), known today as *iwan al-Naṣiri*[1].

In 1281 A. H. (1864 A. D.), the Qajari *wazir*, Mirza Musa, renewed the *iwan* previously built by the Ṣafavid Shah Sulaiman, in the northern section of the open courtyard (*ṣaḥan*). This *iwan* was first known as *iwan Al-Kabeer*, which had an inner hall called *iwan Ṣafi Ṣafa*, then renamed as *iwan Lilo* and finally given the name *iwan al-Wazir*[2].

The previously mentioned gallery which was built by Naṣir al-Din Shah (now known as *iwan al-Naṣiri*) showed a crack before its completion. In 1309 A. H. (1892 A. D.), it was renewed by the Ottoman Sulṭan, Abdul Ḥamid, and thus became also known as *iwan al-Ḥamidi*[3].

In 1354 A. H. (1935 A. D.), the municipality of Karbala demolished both al-Abd minaret and the small courtyard annexed to it to make way for the construction of a new road around the shrine. These two buildings were considered to be among the beautiful Islamic historical landmarks in the city (see plate no. 10).

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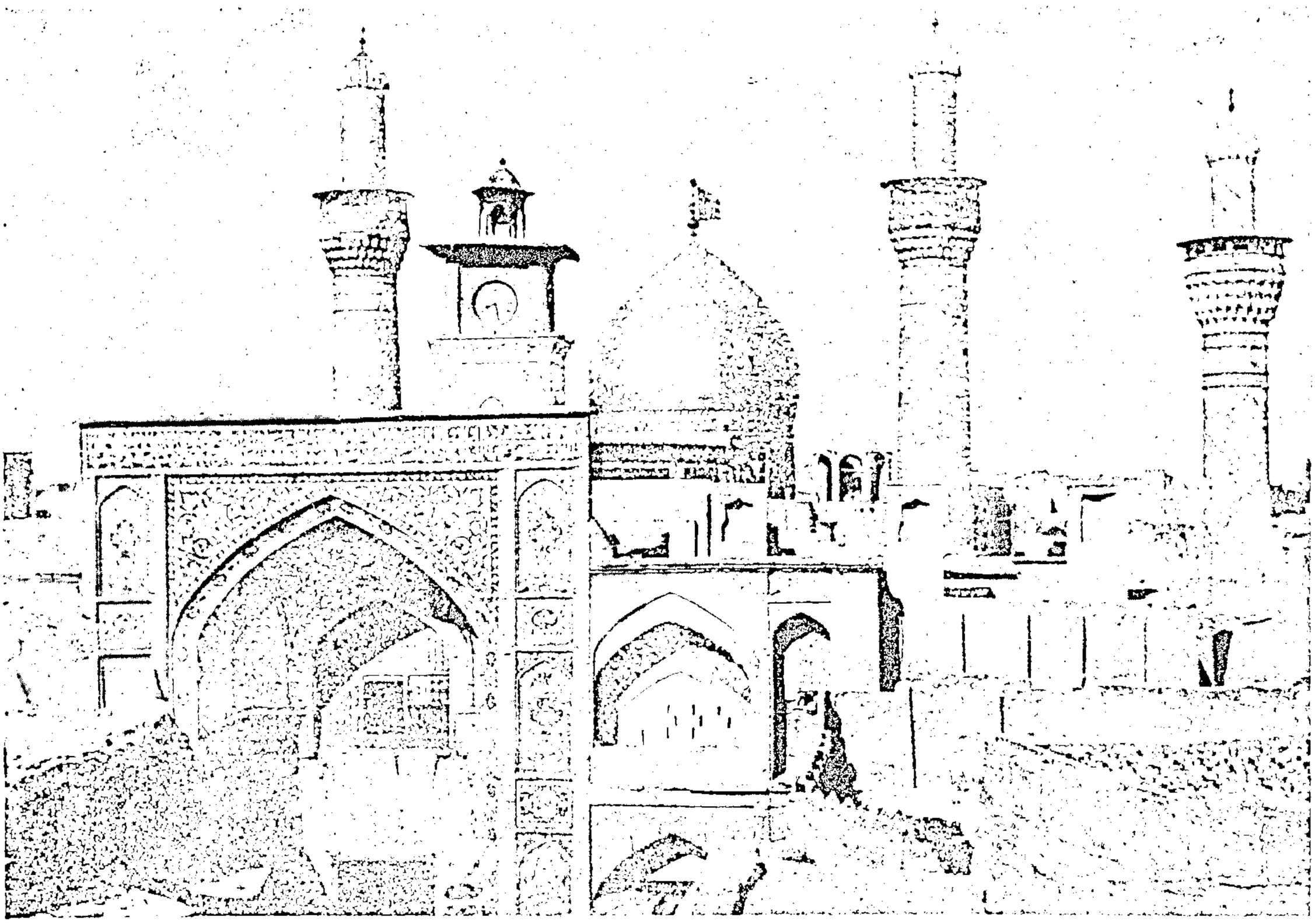
[1] AL-ZENJANI, S. I., Jawla fi al-Amakin al-Muqaddasa, p. 86.
- AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Ḥaraka al-Ilmiya fi Karbala, pp. 20- 21.
- MUDDARIS, M. B., Shahre Ḥussain, pp. 290, 346.

[2] ṬUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 55.

[3] ṬUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 52.



IMAM HUSSAIN SHRINE

SHOWING THE ABED MINARET ON THE RIGHT WHICH HAS BEEN DEMOLISHED IN 1935

Other significant buildings were also demolished which were annexes to the open courtyard (*sahan*) of Imam Hussain (A. S.) shrine such as:

1- Al-Zainabia school.

2- Al-Nasiri Mosque.

3- Sadr al-A'dham al-Nouri school.

4- Ra's (Head) al-Hussain Mosque.

5- Al-Sardar Hassan Khan school.

6- The Buwaihid Kings cemetery.

and many other historical buildings[1].

In 1356 A. H. (1937 A. D.), one of the two remaining minarets (on the western side), built during the rule of Sultan Uwais al-Jalairi, tilted to a worrying degree. Accordingly, the Ismaili Sultan, Taher Saif al-Din, ordered its demolition and built another minaret of clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum, while the eastern minaret remained standing to this day. In 1941, the Ismaili Sultan also gave his instructions to gild the top section of both minarets from the *al-hadhra* roof to its pinnacle[2].

In 1384 A. H. (1964 A. D.), Qanber Rahimi, an Iranian merchant, funded the making of marble columns for the frontal gallery of *al-hadhra* which is best known as *iwan al-Dahab* (Golden Gallery). In 1974 A. D., these columns were installed to replace the old wooden ones which were partially decayed by the effects of

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 246, 269, 270.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, pp. 32, 43, 44.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 266- 267.

humidity (see plate no. 11 & 12)[1].

This replacement has resulted in the loss of a beautiful and original part of the artistic features of the holy shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.). In 1980, work was completed in removing all the exterior buildings adjoining the open courtyard (*sahan*) of the shrine (*rawdha)* of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and also a 10.5 metre high external wall was constructed on the perimeter of the courtyard with entrances, each having a gate, spread in all directions.

Description of the Present al-Rawdha al-Hussainiya (Shrine)

The Imam Hussain holy shrine building (*al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*) represents the central point of the city centre of Karbala. An almost circular road surrounds the shrine building and this in turn is connected to both old and new streets, the most important of which is the pedestrian street linking the two shrines (now converted to an huge open area following the government attack on the city in 1991), *Bab al-Qibla, Bab al-Sidra* and *Bab al-Sultania* streets. The shrine building is mostly distinguished for its huge area, great buildings and the Islamic style in architecture. The *rawdha* is built on a rectangular area, 125 metres long by 95 metres wide. It consists of a single building (known as *al-hadhra*) divided into various parts with the holy tomb (*al-dharih*) in its centre and a vast open courtyard (*sahan*) around this building. There are also gates and rooms on all sides overlooking the

[1] AL-TUMA, A.H.A., Bugyat al-Nubala' fi Tarikh Karbala. p. 173.

HOLY SHRINE OF IMAM HUSSAIN IN 1970.

HOLY SHRINE OF IMAM HUSSAIN IN 1975

sahan[1].

The *rawdha* is a solid construction, built of local clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum and inlaid with the most formations of decorating materials such as gold and silver coating, crystal, pieces of small bright mirror and enamel tiles. The central part of the shrine (*al-hadhra*) is rectangular in shape which is 55 metres long by 45 metres wide and its exterior wall is 12 metres high. The grave of Imam Hussain (A. S.) is inside *al-dharih* which is enclosed in a raised chest 5 metres long by 4 metres wide, while its hieght is 3.5 metres with latticed windows made of silver on all four sides and a golden roof (see plate no. 13). This *dharih* is located in the middle of a large room (*al-dharih* room) which is 4 metres long by 9 metres wide and is regarded as the heart of *al-rawdha* building. Above this room is an elevated dome supported by four huge rectangular columns each with a sectional dimension of 3.5 metres by 2.5 metres while the top of the dome is about 27 metres above the floor level of *al-hadhra*. The bottom part of the dome itself is tall and cylindrical in shape. This part is designed with 12 windows all round the dome which are 1.55 metres apart and each decorated with a pointed arched end. The dome is gilded from the outside with a thin coat except for the lower section which is decorated with *qashani* tiles engraved with verses in Arabesque style from the holy Qur'an. There is a partition line between the gilded and the enamel sections which is decorated with a white foreground and a dark blue background.

The interior of the dome is covered with a beautiful formation of decorating work

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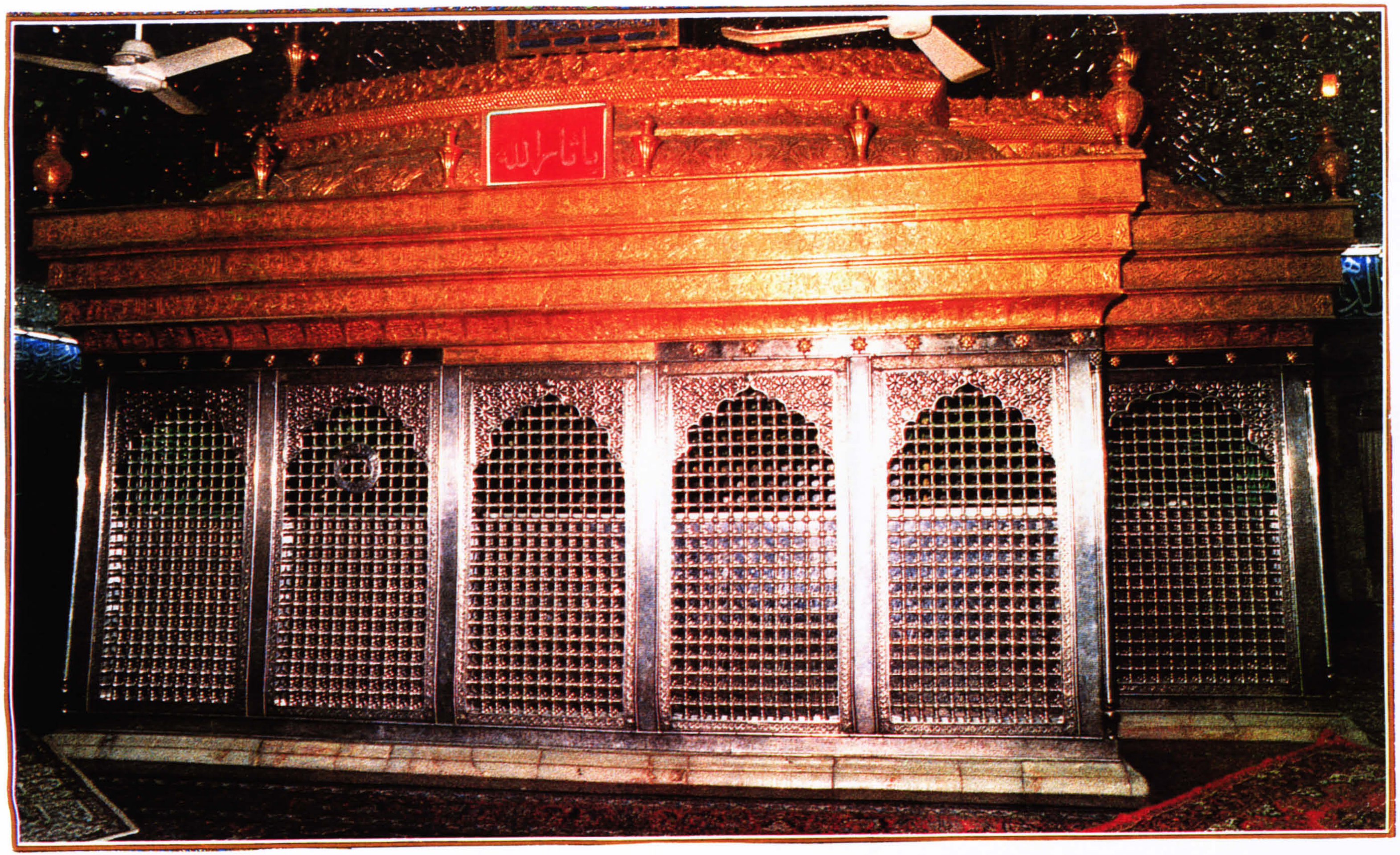
[1] Plan Drawing of al-Rawdha al-Hussainiya, Urban Planning, Planning and Engineering Department, Ministry of Planning, 23/7/1977.
- AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p.21, No. 12146, London, 1996.



DHARIH OF IMAM HUSSAIN (A.S.)

and filled with regularly shaped crystal and pieces of small bright mirror.

The *al-dharih* room is surrounded by four large halls (*rawaqs*) each 5 metres wide while its northern and southern sides are each 40 metres long and its eastern and western sides are each 45 metres long and the ceiling of the halls is 12 metres high. The floor of these halls are paved with white marble and the walls are overlaid with the same marble up to 2 metres high. The rest of the walls and the roofs are decorated with beautiful crystal and pieces of small bright mirror. The northern hall is used as a prayer hall and is known as the Shah Hall (*rawaq al-Shah*) because one of its corners is the burial place of the kings of the Qajari Kingdom. The western hall is known as Sayyid Ibrahim al-Mujab Hall while the hall facing the direction of Makka (*Qibla*) is named after Habib ibn Mudhahir al-Asadi, one of the martyrs of al-Taff event, because his burial place is located in the western corner of this hall. The above four halls have eight gates, all leading to the open courtyard (*sahan*). The most important of these gates is situated in the middle of the *Qibla* hall and is known as *Bab al-Dahab* (Golden Gate). The *Qibla* Hall leads, from the outside, to a large gallery known as *iwan al-Dahab* (Golden Gallery) which is 36 metres long by 10 metres wide. The *iwan* ceiling is 15 metres high and, therefore, is the highest building in the shrine apart from the dome and minarets. It is supported by marble columns with pointed arches at the top between every two columns. The frontal walls of the *iwan* are gilded and decorated with mosaic and enamel tiles (*qashani*). This *iwan* is flanked from the outside with two beautifully gilded minarets which are cylindrical in shape and each 4 metres in diameter while the height of each of them above the roof level of

the shrine building is 25 metres. There is also an internal helical stairs inside each minaret which can only be reached from inside *al-ḥadhra* and terminates at the covered balcony, also known as call for prayers (*Azan*) balcony, located at the upper half of the minaret. This balcony is supported by three faults of the beautifully decorated *muqarnaṣats*. The top section above the *Azan* balcony is also cylindrical in shape and is known for being tall and of solid construction. However, it is smaller in diameter from the main body of the minaret and terminates at the top with a small bulb shaped dome having a sharp end at its top and segmented along its height with a metallic crescent fixed at its pinnacle. *Al-ḥadhra al-Ḥussainiya* also includes the tomb of martyrs which is to the east of the Imam Ḥussain (A. S.) tomb. All the martyrs bodies are placed in one tomb (*dharih*) which has a one-sided silver decorated latticed window and made with high precision.

The outside walls of the open courtyard are lined with a beautiful mixture of decorating work which reflects the artistic qualities of the Islamic architecture. These walls are 10.5 metres high which incorporate 65 rooms overlooking the open courtyard (*ṣaḥan*). Each room is preceded with a small *iwan* which is surmounted by a pointed arch while the room walls are decorated, both on its interior and exterior sides, with mosaic tiles. Most of these rooms house the tombs of great religious scholars and leaders. The space on top of these rooms in partly occupied by stores while the rest is a roof overlooking the courtyard[1].

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[1] AL-ANṢARI, R., Al-Ḥayat Newspaper, p. 21, No. 12146, London, 28/5/1996.
AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Ḥussain , pp. 46- 58.
- Plan Drawing of al-Rawdha al-Ḥussainiya, prepared by Urban Planning, Engineering and Planning Department, Iraq Ministry of Planning, 1977.

In 1980, the Iraqi government demolished most of the tombs and converted the rooms in the external walls to stores, halls and public lavatories[1].

The original design of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* building became an architectural standard for the shrines built later since there are styles and qualities which are seldom found grouped together in any one of the other previous shrines. Thus, placing the *al-dharih* room, the mosque and the surrounding halls collectively in the centre of the area occupied by the shrine buildings is considered a turning point in planning and design[2].

The shrine open courtyard can be reached from the outside through ten entrances, each with a gate, some are old while others were built in recent years. The façade of these entrances are designed with pointed arches and decorated with the most beautiful formations of *qashani* tiles (see plate no. 14). The most important of these old entrances are:

- Bab al-Qibla:

This is situated in the middle of the southern side of the shrine, facing the direction of the holy city of Makka (*Qibla*). The entrance is 15 metres long by 5.5 metres wide while its gate is 6 metres high and 4 metres wide and there is a big clock tower on top of the entrance. This was considered to be the oldest gate in

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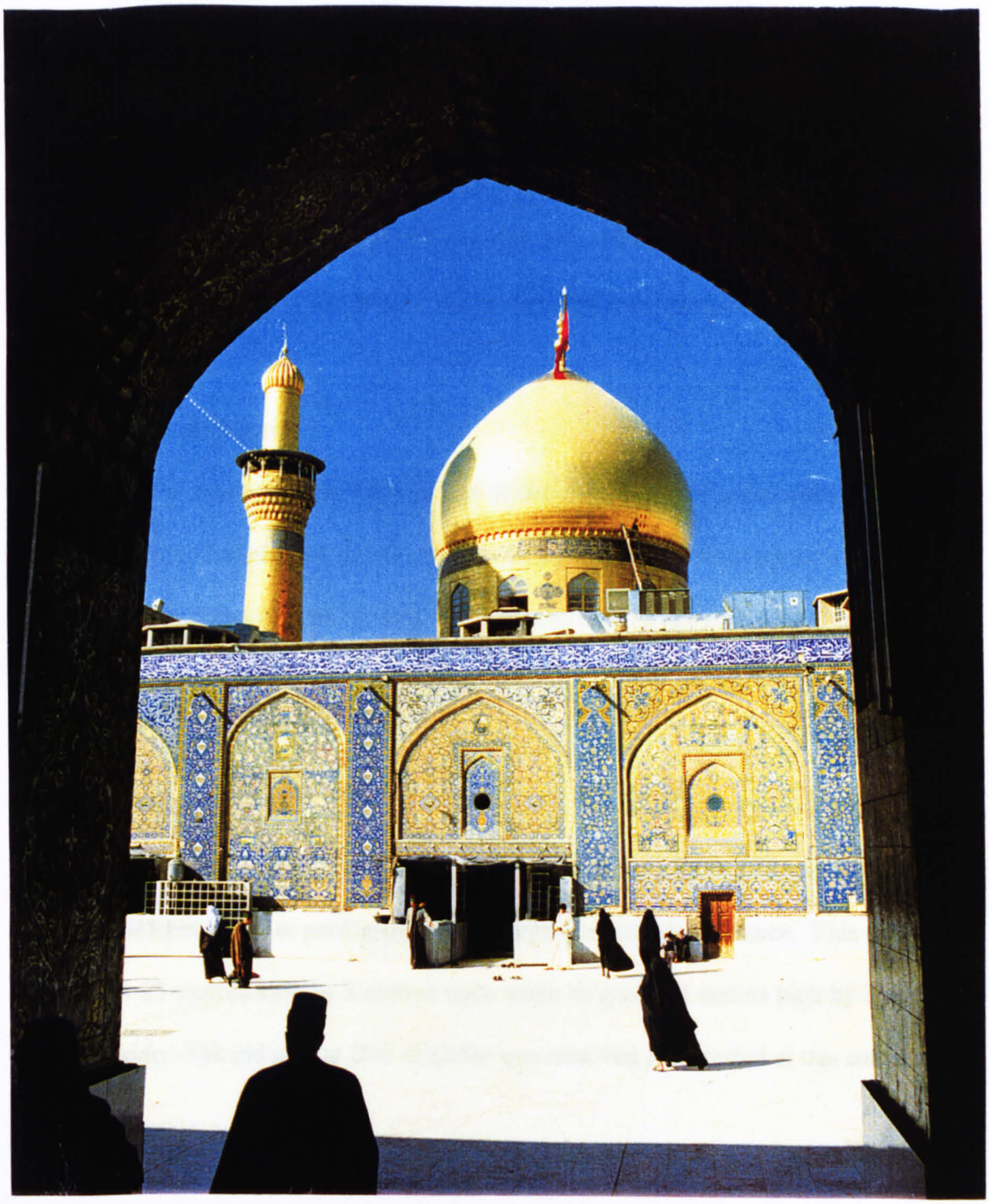
[1] Plan Drawing of al-Rawdha al-Hussainiya, Urban Planning, Ministry of Planning, 1980.

[2] AL-JANABI, T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, p. 320, Dar al-Hurriya lil Tiba'a, Baghdad, 1980.



ONE OF THE ENTRANCES TO IMAM HUSSAIN (A.S.) SHRINES.

al-rawdha al-Hussainiya. However, this old gate was recently replaced with a new one.

- Bab al-Zainabia:

This is situated to the west of *Bab al-Qibla*. It was so named because it leads to *tell* (Hill) *al-Zainabia* outside the *sahan*. This entrance is 10 metres long by 2.5-3.5 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high and 3 metres wide.

- Bab al-Sultani:

This is situated in the western side of the *sahan*. It was called after one of the Ottoman Sultans who gave instruction for its erection. This entrance is 15 metres long by 3 metres at its inlet and 6 metres at its outlet while its gate is 4 metres high by 3 metes wide.

- Bab al- Sidra:

This is situated in the north western side of the *sahan*. Its name was derived from the lotus (*Sidra* or *nabk*) tree which was just outside this entrance. This entrance is 13 metres long by 3 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high by 3 metres wide. The old gate at *Bab al-Qibla* was removed and erected at this entrance.

- Bab al-Sahan al-Sagheer:

This is also known as *Bab al-Shuhada'* (Martyr entrance) and *Bab al-Safi* and is also considered as one of the oldest entrances to the shrine. It is located in the eastern side of the *sahan* and leads to the holy shrine of al- Abbas. Its entrance

is 16 metres long by 3.5 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high by 3 metres wide.

- Bab Qadi al-Hajaat:

It is also known as *Bab al-Murad* and located in the eastern side of the *sahan* opposite *souk al-Arab*. It is also considered as one of the oldest entrances and is 16 metres long by 3.5 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high by 3 metres wide.

The following are the recently built entrances:

- Bab Ras al-Hussain:

It is known by this name because of its location opposite the burial place of the head of Imam Hussain (A. S.). It is situated between *Bab al-Zainabia* and *Bab al-Sultani* on the western side of the *sahan*. Its opening was either cut through *iwan al-Nasiri* or *iwan al-Hamidi*. Its entrance is 10 metres long by 4.5 metres wide at the inlet to 6 metres wide at the outlet while its height is 15 metres. There is also a gate which is 4 metres high and 3 metres wide and a big clock tower on top of the entrance.

- Bab al-Karaama:

This is situated in the north eastern side of the *sahan* opposite the well known *souk al-Hussain*, part of which was demolished in 1980 and the rest demolished in 1991. Its ceiling is arched shaped which is built of clay bricks and decorated

with beautifully coloured enamel tiles. This entrance is slightly diverted at the outlet and is 12 metres long by 3.5 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high and 3 metres wide.

- Bab al-Raja':

This is located in the south eastern side of the *sahan* opposite the old *Pasha Khan* on whose ruins the *Hussainiya al-Haideriya* was built. This *hussainiya*, however, was itself demolished by the ruling Iraqi government in 1991. The entrance of *Bab al-Raja'* is 16 metres by 3.5 metres while its gate is 5 metres high and 3.5 metres wide[1].

- Bab al-Saliheen:

This is one of the most recent entrances and was opened in 1960. It is situated in the northern side of the *sahan* and inside *iwan al-Wazir*. Its entrance is 10 metres long by 7 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high and 3 metres wide[2].

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[1] AL-SADR, S. H., Majjalat Risalet al-Sharq, 2nd Issue, Arabic Text, pp. 41- 42, Matba'at al-Najah, Baghdad, 1954.
- AL-TUMA, A. H. A., Bughyet al-Nubala' fi Tarikh Karbala, pp. 169- 171.
- Plan Drawing of al-Rawdha al-Hussainiya, 1980.
- AL-ANSARI, R., Majjalat al-Noor, p. 6, Issue No. 61.

[2] AL-TUMA, A. H. A., Bughyet al-Nubala' fi Tarikh Karbala, p. 171.
- Plan Drawing of al-Rawdha al-Hussainiya, 1980.

4.3 Al-Abbas Shrine

The holy shrine of al-Abbas (*al-rawdha al-Abbasia*) is considered the second most important building of Islamic architecture in the holy city of Karbala. It encompasses the burial place of the great warrior al-Abbas (A. S.) who was martyred along with his brother Imam Hussain (A. S.) in the event of al-Taff in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.)[1].

Since its construction and throughout the different historical stages passed by Karbala, the building of the shrine of al-Abbas was given similar treatment and attention to that given to the shrine of his brother Imam Hussain[2].

In 372 A. H. (983 A. D.) and during the rule of the Buwaihid Caliph Adhud al-Dawla, the first building was constructed over the grave of al-Abbas. He built a high dome constructed of the local clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum[3].

In 1032 A. H. (1623 A. D.) and during the rule of the Safavid Shah Abbas (I) (grandson of Shah Tahmasib), the dome of al-Abbas shrine was decorated with the coloured *qashani* tiles and a four sided latticed chest was placed on the grave. He also renewed the *rawaq* and *sahan* in addition to the construction of the frontal

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 21, No. 12146, London, 28/5/1996.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er Al-Hussain, p. 276.
- AL-HASSANI, A. R., Al-Iraq Qadeeman wa Hadeethan, p. 129.

[3] AL-ISFAHANI, I. D., Tarikh wa Jughrafya'ee Karbala Mu'alla, p. 182, Karbala.

gallery (*bahou*) of *al-hadhra*[1].

In 1153 A. H. (1740 A. D.), the Afshari Nadir Shah presented gifts in the form of many ornaments to this shrine and also decorated some of the buildings of the shrine[2].

In 1182 A. H. (1768 A. D.), The Nawab Bahra' contributed to the renewal of the shrine by renovating the ceiling of *al-dharih* of al-Abbas with teakwood and beechwood. The renovation work was supervised by Mirza Mohammed Baqer al-Raja Al-Ha'eri while the decorating work was carried out by the carpenter Pashi Usta Ismail[3].

In 1183 A. H. (1769 A. D.), the *wazir* (Minister) of the Afshari Nadir Shah, Mirza Hussain Shah Zada, ordered the renovation of the front *rawaq* of *al-hadhra* and the replacement of the *Mushabbak* of the tomb with a new one[4].

Following the attack of the Wahabis on Karbala in 1216 A. H. (1801 A. D.), the Qajari Fateh Ali Shah ordered the renewal of the dome of al-Abbas shrine and its decoration with coloured *qashani* tiles[5].

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1 AL-MUQARRAM, A.R., Al-Abbas, Arabic Text, p. 387, Dar al-Firdaws, Beirut, Lebanon, 1988.

2 AL-MUQARRAM, A.R., Qammar Benni Hashim, pp. 126, 127, Al-Matba'a al-Haidaria, Najaf, Iraq, 1949. - TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 62.

3 TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 65.

4 MUDDARIS, M.B., Shahre Hussain, p. 342.

5 AL-MUQARRAM, A.R., Al-Abbas, p. 388, Dar al-Firdaws, Beirut, Lebanon, 1988.

In 1221 A. H. (1806 A. D.), the two minarets of *al-Rawdha al-Abbasia* were covered on the exterior with *qashani* tiles by Mohammed Hussain Sadr al-A'dham al-Isfahani[1].

In 1236 A.H. (1821 A. D.), the Qajari Mohammed Shah son of Abbas Mirza Fateh Ali ordered the replacement of the *al-dharih* of al-Abbas (A. S.) with a new silvery one. In 1246 A.H. (1831 A. D.), *al-dharih* was completed and installed in a place over the grave[2].

In 1259 A.H. (1843 A. D.), the Sultan of Oudh Kingdom in India Mohammed Ali Shah son of al-Sultan Majid Ali Shah renewed the buildings of the *rawaqs* and the *al-dharih, also he* covered the dome and the frontal bahou with qashani tiles[3].

In 1266 A. H. (1850 A. D.), al-Abbas shrine building was renewed by the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Majid (I), son of Sultan Mahmoud (II), who took over as Caliph in 1256 A. H. (1840 A. D.) and died in 1277 A. H. (1861 A. D.)[4].

In 1283 A. H. (1866 A. D.), the Qajari Nasir al-Deen Shah ordered Sheikh Abdul Hussain al-Tahrani, nicknamed Sheikh al-Iraqiyeen, to undertake the construction of the western side and part of the northern side of the *sahan*. In 1304 A. H.

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[1] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 64.

[2] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 65.

[3] AL-MUDHAFFAR, A.W., Batal al-Alqami, p. 318, Vol. 3, Qum, Iran.

[4] Al-KAMMUNA, M. A., Diwan ibn Kammuna, Arabic Text, p. 103, Matba'at Dar al-Nashr wal Talif, Najaf, 1948.

(1887 A. D.), the construction of the eastern side and the remaining part of the northern side was undertaken by Mohammed Sadiq al-Shushtari, nicknamed al-Isfahani. He also renewed the *qashani* tiles covering of the exterior of the dome[1].

In 1306 A. H. (1889 A. D.), the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid ordered the renewal of the ceiling of the frontal *Bahou* with teakwood and beechwood[2].

In 1309 A. H. (1892 A. D.), Ihtiram al-Dawla, wife of the Qajari Nasir al-Deen Shah, started the gilding of the frontal gallery (*bahou*) of the *hadhrat al-Abbas*. Asif Mohammed Ali Shah, also known as al-Laknahouri, completed the gilding of the rest of the frontal wall of this gallery[3].

In 1311 A. H. (1894 A. D.), a big clock tower with a beautiful architectural design was installed over the *Qibla* entrance by Hajji Amin al-Sultan which is still standing today. This work was supervised by Sayyid Ali Qutub. In 1367 A. H. (1948 A. D.), an Iranian merchant, Hajji Hussain Hajjar Bashi, contributed towards the paving of the floor of the *sahan* (open courtyard) with stone brought specially for this purpose from Iran[4].

In 1371 A. H. (1951 A. D.), the facade of the *sahan* was decorated with *qashani*

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, M.H.M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 62.

[2] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 64.

[3] AL-KILLIDAR, M.H.M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 62.

[4] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 64.

tiles brought from Iran. Also the walls and ceiling of the interior of *al-ḥadhra* were covered with crystal and pieces of small bright mirror and other beautiful artistic décor[1].

In 1375 A. H. (1955 A. D.), the dome of al-Abbas shrine was gilded for the first time during the time of Makki Jamil, governor of Karbala[2].

In 1385 A. H. (1965 A. D.), a new *dharih* made of gold and silver and decorated with precious stones was placed over the grave of al-Abbas by instructions of the Grand Ayatollah (*Marji'*) Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim[3].

In 1385 A. H. (1965 A. D.), a piece of land was appropriated next to the *sahan* of the al-Abbas shrine and a guesthouse to serve the pilgrims of al-Abbas shrine was built in its location[4].

In 1400 A. H. (1980 A. D.), demolition work was completed in removing all the buildings attached to the *sahan* of al-Abbas shrine from the outside. An external wall was built around the *sahan* with a height of 10.50 metres where the gates are distributed on all sides of the *sahan*[5].

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[1] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 70.

[2] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 68.

[3] AL-AMIN, H., Da'iret al-Ma'arif al-Shi'iyya, Vol. 11, p. 356.

[4] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 71.

[5] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 21, No. 12146, London, 28/5/1996.

Description of the Present al-Rawdha al-Abbasia (Shrine)

The al-Abbas Shrine (*al-rawdha al-Abbasia*) is situated in the north eastern direction of the *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* (Imam Hussain Shrine) and about 350 metres from it. It is surrounded by a semi circular road connected to both old and new streets, the most recent and important of these is the pedestrian road which is now a vast open land between the two shrines. The other streets connected to the semi circular road are *al-Abbas* (also known as *al-Qibla*), *al-Alqami*, *Sahib al-Zaman*, *Baghdad* and *Imam Ali* streets. *Al-rawdha al-Abbasia* is rectangular in shape, 118.50 metres long by 93.60 metres wide and consists of *al-hadhra* building, the open courtyard (*sahan*) and a wall surrounding *al-sahan* from all sides. The *al-hadhra* building occupies the central section of the *Rawdha* and is 48 metres long by 39 metres wide while the tomb room (*al-dharih* room) is relatively large and situated in the centre of the *al-hadhra*[1].

The plan of the *al-Rawdha al-Abbasia* does not differ from that of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* as far as its area, enormity, loftiness or the Islamic architecture[2].

However, the halls (*rawaq*) which surround the tomb room differ in size between the two *Rawdhas* (Shrines). The tomb room represents the heart of the *Rawdha* building and is almost square in shape and relatively large in size with 19 metres side measured from the outside. Its walls are thick and is relatively high. The

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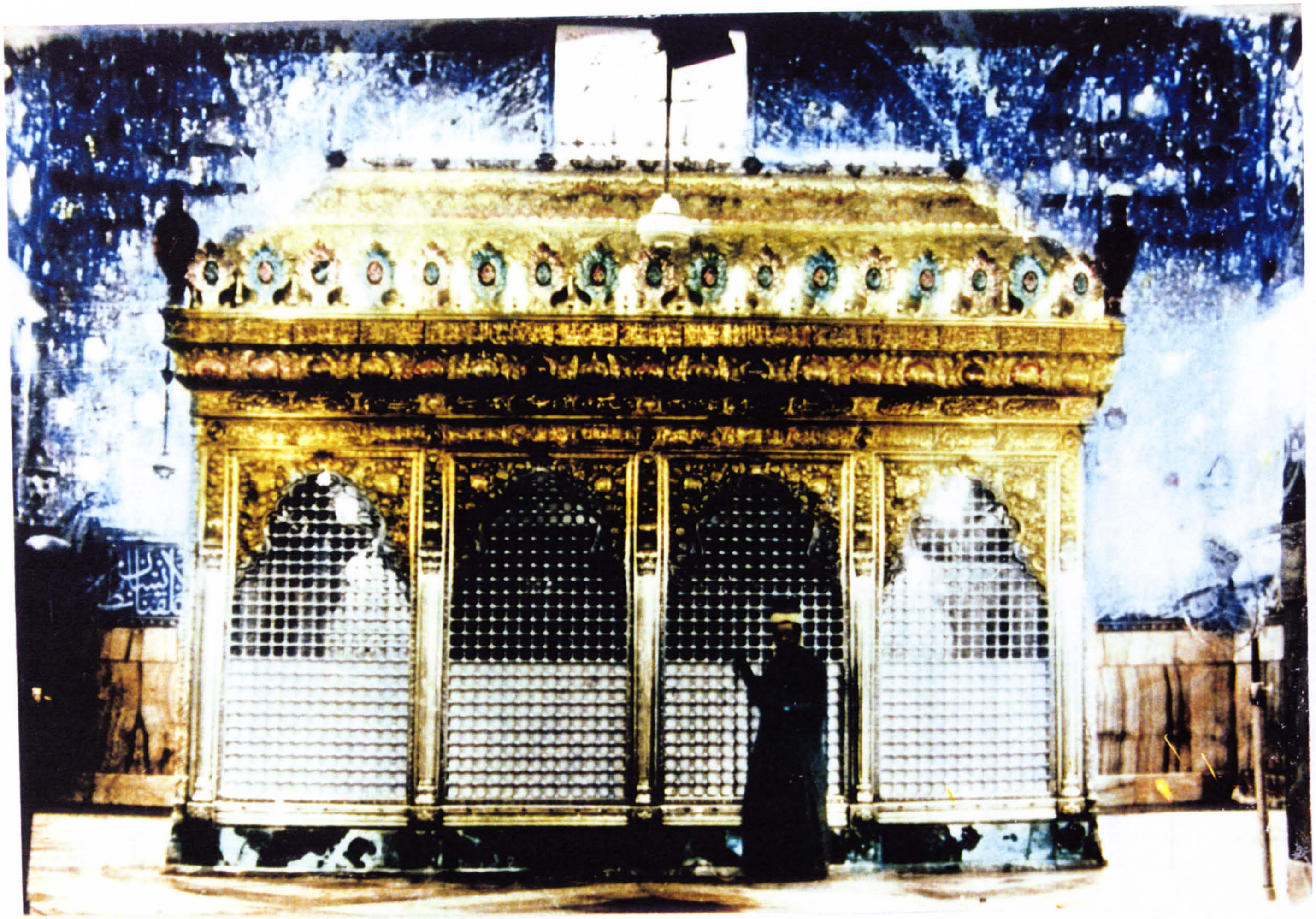
[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12146, p. 21, London, 28/5/1966.

[2] MAHFOUDH, DR. H.A., Mawsoo'at al-Atebat al-Muqaddasa edited by Jafar al-Khalili, p. 158.
- AL-JANABI, T.J., Vol. 10, p. 321.

tomb (*al-dharih*)of al-Abbas (A. S.) situated in the centre of this room and is enclosed in a raised chest with latticed windows made of silver on all four sides and a golden roof (see plate no. 15). The tomb room is surmounted by a lofty dome whose diameter is 12 metres while its height is 39 metres above the floor of *al-hadhr*a. The dome is semi circular, pointed at the top and has a long lower section (base). All around in this section, there are pointed arched windows lying in between this part of the dome. The interior of the dome is covered with beautiful combinations of decorations of *muqarnasats* which itself is covered with crystal and pieces of small bright mirror while the exterior is gilded. There is a gate in the middle of each of the four walls of the *al-dharih* room which each lead to hall (*rawaq*) and the *rawaqs* are opened between them. Each *rawaq* is 5 metres wide and surrounded by rooms. The *rawaqs* are opened to the *sahan* through six gates, the most important of which is the Qibla Gate (*Bab al-Qibali*) of *al-hadhra*.

This gate leads to a large rectangular shaped gallery (*Bahou*) 30.90 metres long by 6.90 metres wide which is known as *iwan al-Dahab* (Golden Gallery). The front wall of this *iwan* overlooking the *sahan* is covered with gilded copper tiles from the ceiling down to two metres above the floor of the *iwan*. The *iwan* is flanged with two lofty minarets which are cylindrical in shape, adjoining the wall of the *al-hadhra* and each 44 metres in height above the floor level of the *al-hadhra*. The top section and the balcony of the minarets are gilded while the two lower sections are covered with a superb combination of decorations of *qashani* tiles and inscription in its middle with verses of the Qur'an written in the beautiful Kufi calligraphy. Inside each minaret is a spiral staircase which is reached from the ground floor of *al-hadhra* and end at the covered balcony of the minaret. The



DHARIH OF AL-ABBAS (A.S.) IN 1975.

balcony, used as a platform for call to prayers, is situated in the top half of the minaret and is supported by two rows of beautifully decorated *muqarnaṣats*. The upper section above the balcony is also cylindrical in shape, long and strong but smaller in diameter than the main body of the minaret and terminates at the top with a small dome, onion shape, pointed towards the top, consisting of sectors which are clove shaped and a mast at the upper most position consisting of bronze balls differing in size (see plate no. 16)[1].

It is worth mentioning that there is a rectangular subway around the *al-ḥadhra* building, designed in a professional way and leads to the burial place of al-Abbas. The subway can be reached from a gate of one of the rear *rawaqs* of *al-ḥadhra* building[2].

The interior walls of *ṣaḥan* are covered with beautiful decorations of mosaic and *qashani* tiles which were built along time ago[3].

The exterior walls of the *al-Rawdha al-Abbasia* are covered with combinations of various decorations by using local bricks (*a'jur*) and gypsum. The walls height is 10.50 metres and is opened to *ṣaḥan* through a series of rooms numbering 57. Each of these rooms is preceded with a small gallery (*iwan*) surmounted by a pointed arch while the exterior and interior walls of these rooms are covered with

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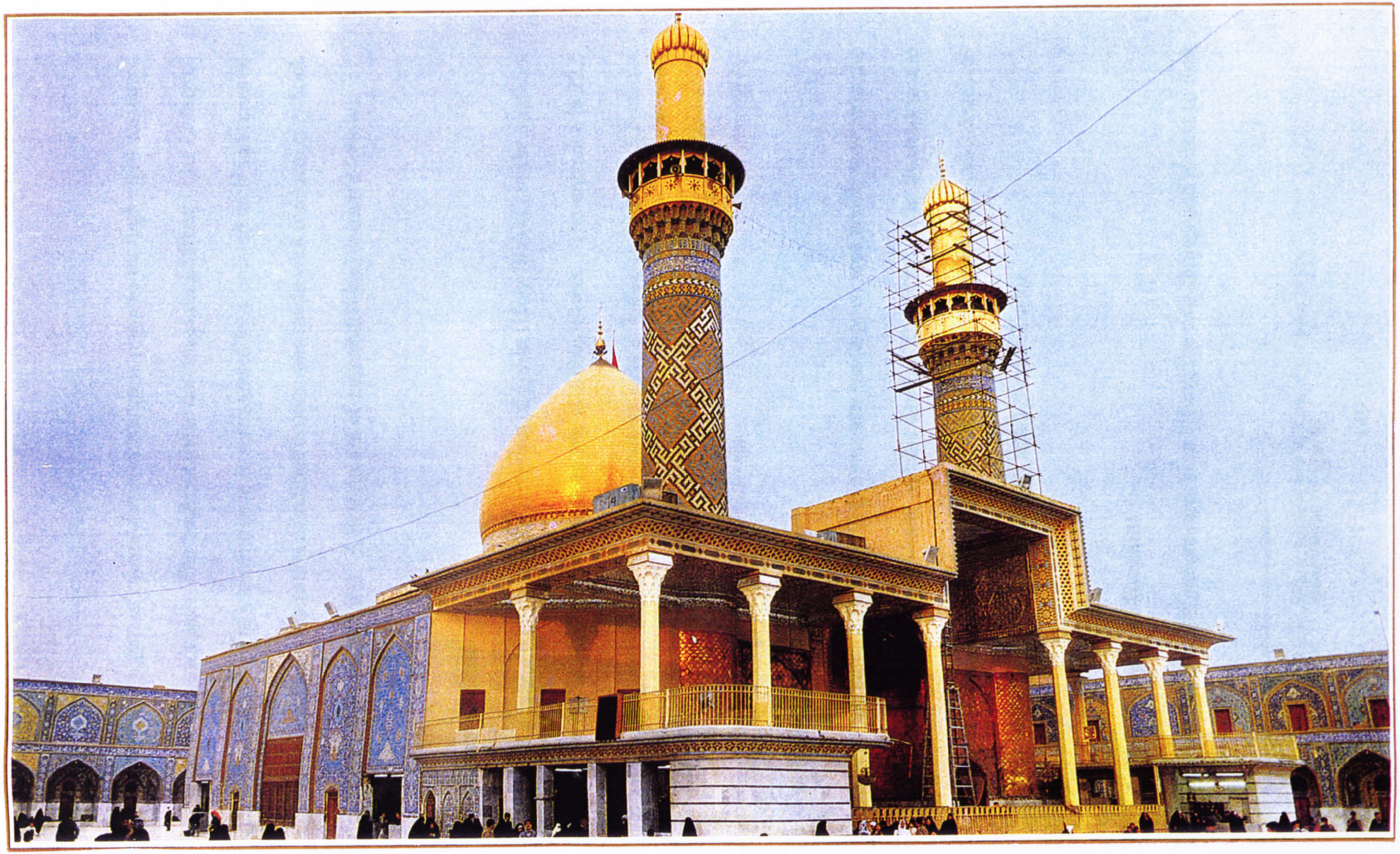
[1] AL-ANṢARI, R., Al-Ḥayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12146, p.21, London, 25/8/1996.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Ḥussain, pp. 63, 64.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ḥaer al-Ḥussain, p. 276.

[3] AL-AMIN, H., Da'iret al-Ma'arif al-Islamia al-Shi'iyya, Vol. 11, p. 356.



HOLY SHRINE OF AL-ABBAS IN 1975

mosaic tiles[1].

Entry to the *sahan* of *al-rawdha al-Abbasia* is possible through eight entrances each with its own gate. The height of these entrances range from 11 to 12 metres and the frontage of each entrance is surmounted by a pointed arch and covered with a beautiful combination of various decorations made with the local clay brick (*a'jur*) and *qashani* tiles. A description of each individual entrance follows:

1- Bab al-Qibla:

This is positioned towards the direction of *Qibla* (Holy Makka) in the southern side of the *al-Rawdha* and leads to the al-Abbas Street. The entrance is 22.5 metres long and 3.5 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high and 3.5 metres wide. There is also a clock tower over this entrance.

2- Bab al-Imam al-Hassan:

This is the entrance leading to the recently made open area which now links the two shrines of Imam Hussain and his brother al-Abbas. It is situated in the western side of al-Abbas shrine and its entrance is 7.5 metres long and 3.5 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high and 3.5 metres wide.

3- Bab al-Imam al-Hussain:

This also leads to the present open area linking the two shrines and is next to *Bab*

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12146, p. 21, London, 28/5/96.
- AL-JANABI, T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, p. 322.

al-Imam al-Hassan. This entrance is 12 metres long and 3.5 metres wide but becoming wider from the middle of the entrance. Its gate is 4 metres high and 3.5 metres wide.

4- Bab Sahib al-Zaman:

This is the entrance leading to Sahib al-Zaman Street and is also situated in the western side of the shrine and next to *Bab al-Imam al-Hussain*. The entrance is 12 metres long and 3.5 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high and 3.5 metres wide.

5- Bab al-Imam Musa al-Kadhim:

This is also situated in the western side of the shrine and its entrance is 20 metres long and it is bent at the entrance to the *sahan*. Its width is 6 metres but becomes less as it approaches the *sahan*. The gate is 4 metres high and 3.5 metres wide.

6- Bab al-Imam al-Jawad:

This is situated in the northern side of the shrine and leads to the *Bab Baghdad* quarter. The entrance is 10.5 metres long and 4 metres wide but becoming wider from the middle onwards reaching 6 metres. The gate is 4 metres high and 3.5 metres wide.

7- Bab al-Alqami:

This is also called *Bab al-Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha*. It leads to the *al-Alqami* street and is situated in the eastern side of the shrine. The entrance is 10.5 metres

long and 4 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high and 3.5 metres wide.

8- Bab al-Imam Ali:

This entrance leads to *souk Bab al-Khan* and is also situated in the eastern side of the shrine. The entrance is 9 metres long by 3.5 metres wide while its gate is 4 metres high and 3.5 metres wide[1].

[1] DALIL AL-ATABAT AL-MUQADDASA FI LIWA' KARBALA, Arabic Text, pp. 19, 20, Maṭba'at Dar al-Jamhuria, Baghdad, 1967.
- AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, pp. 60, 61.
- DIWAN AL-AWQAF, Overall plan of al-Rawdha al-Abbasia for 1968, Baghdad.

4.4 Smaller Shrines, Maqams (Sanctuaries) and al-Mukhaiyam

4.4.1 Smaller Shrines

The smaller shrines are the locations of burial places of notables such as the descendants of the Imams, religious scholars and important religious figures who are considered by the people to have a respected religious dignity. Some of these shrines were built by incorporating various architectural styles while others were built of simple structure. The city of Karbala embraces many of these shrines and other religious sanctuaries which are visited by pilgrims during the religious visitation seasons. The most important of these small shrines are:

1. Al-Hur ibn Yazid al-Reyahi Shrine

This is situated 8 kilometres to the west of the city of Karbala near the area known as al-Kamalia. Al-Hur was martyred with Imam Hussain (A. S.) in the al-Taff event in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.). The first structure over the Al-Hur's grave was built by Shah Ismail al-Safavi following his visit to Iraq in 914 A. H. (1508 A. D.). The shrine consisted of a building surrounded by small *iwans* and an open courtyard. The building is surmounted by a dome built of local clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum while each *iwan* is covered by a pointed arch. In 1330 A. H. (1912 A. D.), the Hamadani Sultan, Agha Hussain Khan Shuja', renewed the dome

building and covered its exterior with *qashani* tiles (see plate no. 17)[1].

Renovation and repair work was carried out several times on the al-Hur shrine building and more significantly on the frontal *iwan* and during different periods.

Description of the Present al-Hur Shrine Building

The al-Hur shrine building was built on a square land 70 metres long. The *dharih* building which is in the centre of the shrine is polygon in shape with an area of 580 square metres. This encloses the *dharih* room in its centre which embraces the al-Hur grave. The latter is covered by a four sided silver coated latticed box and the *dharih* room is surmounted by a dome 7 metres in diameter and 10 metres in height above the *dharih* room ground level while the exterior of the dome is covered with *qashani* tiles. The *dharih* room is surrounded from three sides by a *rawaq* (hall) 5 metres high while the front of the *dharih* building is preceded by a large *iwan* 26 metres long by 3 metres wide and having a facade consisting of pointed arches with the middle arch being wider than the rest. The arches are supported by circular columns and decorated with *qashani* tiles. Around the *dharih* building is a vast open courtyard and the latter is surrounded from its four sides by rooms each preceded by small sized *iwan* surmounted by a pointed arch. These rooms and *iwans* are used by the pilgrims as rest places. There are two entrances leading to the open courtyard of the shrine, one in the frontal wall and

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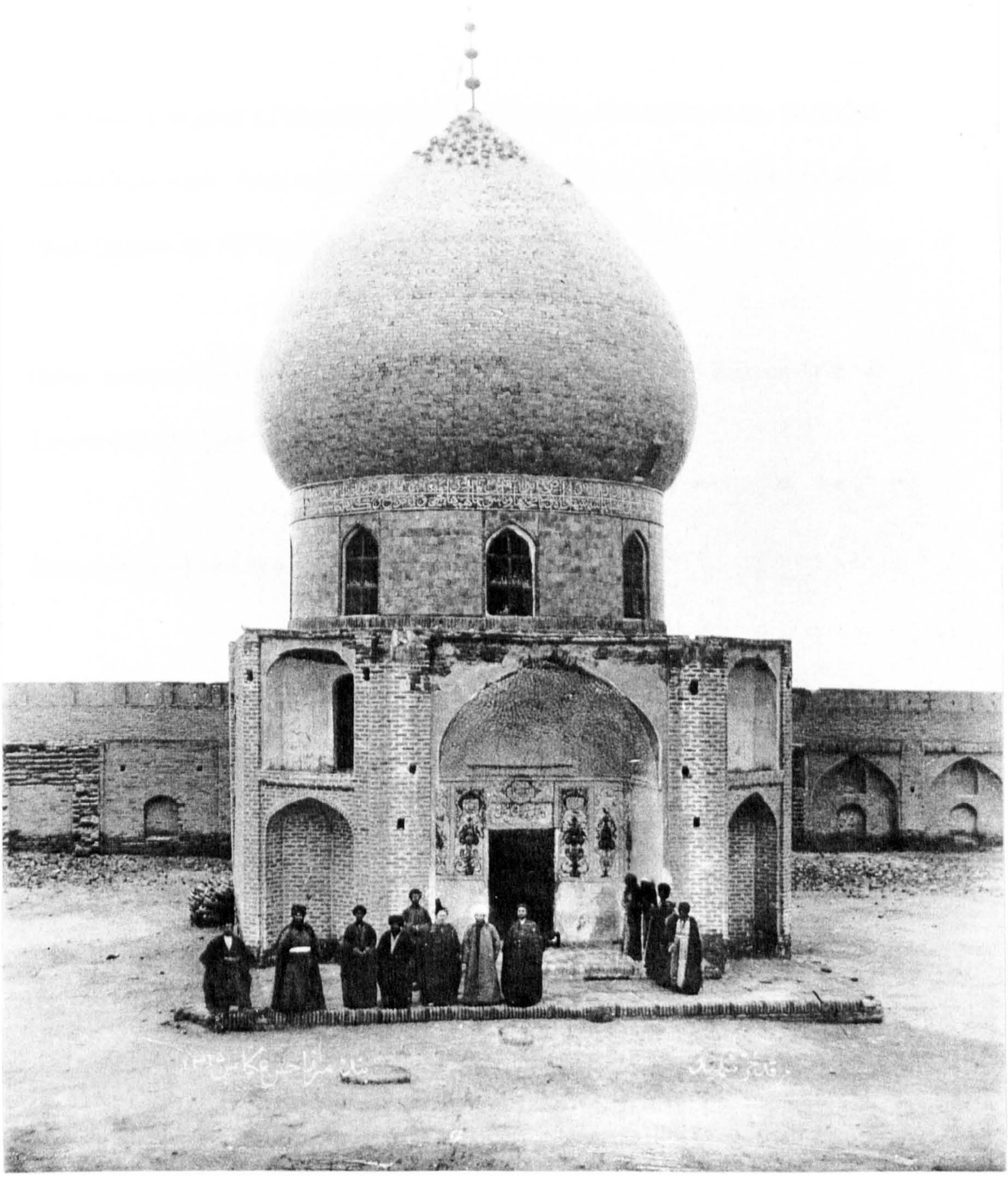
[1] AL-ZANJANI, I.A., Jawla fi al-Amakin al-Muqaddasa, pp. 88, 89.
- DR. MAHFOUDH, H.A., Mawsoo'at al-Atabat al-Muqaddasa, section on Karbala, by Ja'far al-Khalili, p. 156.
- SOUSA, A., al-Dalil al-Jughrafi, p. 60, Baghdad, 1960.



THE SHRINE OF AL- HUR IBN YAZID AL- RIYAHI - 1890.

the other in the wall on the left side of the shrine (see plate no. 18).

2. Awn Ibn Abdullah Shrine

This shrine is situated 12 kilometres to the north east of Karbala on the Baghdad-Karbala new road. Awn is the son of Abdullah ibn Ja'far who is a descendant of Imam Hassan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.)[1].

Other sources believe that this shrine is that of Awn ibn Abdullah ibn Ja'far al-Tayyar ibn Abi Talib[2].

Description of the Present Shrine Building

This building occupies a land rectangular in shape which is about 55 metres long by 50 metres wide having a long *rawaq* in the front which is 55 metres long by 2.5 metres wide. The main entrance is positioned in the middle of this *rawaq* which directly leads to the *dharih* building. The facade of this *rawaq* consists of openings surmounted by pointed arches which are closed by interlaced blue ceramic tiles while the facade itself is decorated with local brick (*a'jur*) and *qashani* tiles. The *hadhra* building which occupies the central part of shrine is square shaped which is 10.5 metres long and contains a 5.5 metres long square shaped *dharih* room in its centre. The grave lies in the middle of this room and

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[1] HIRZ AL-DIN, M., Maraqid al-Ma'arif, Vol. 2, Arabic Text, pp. 141, 142, Matba'at al-A'dab, Najaf, Iraq, 1971.

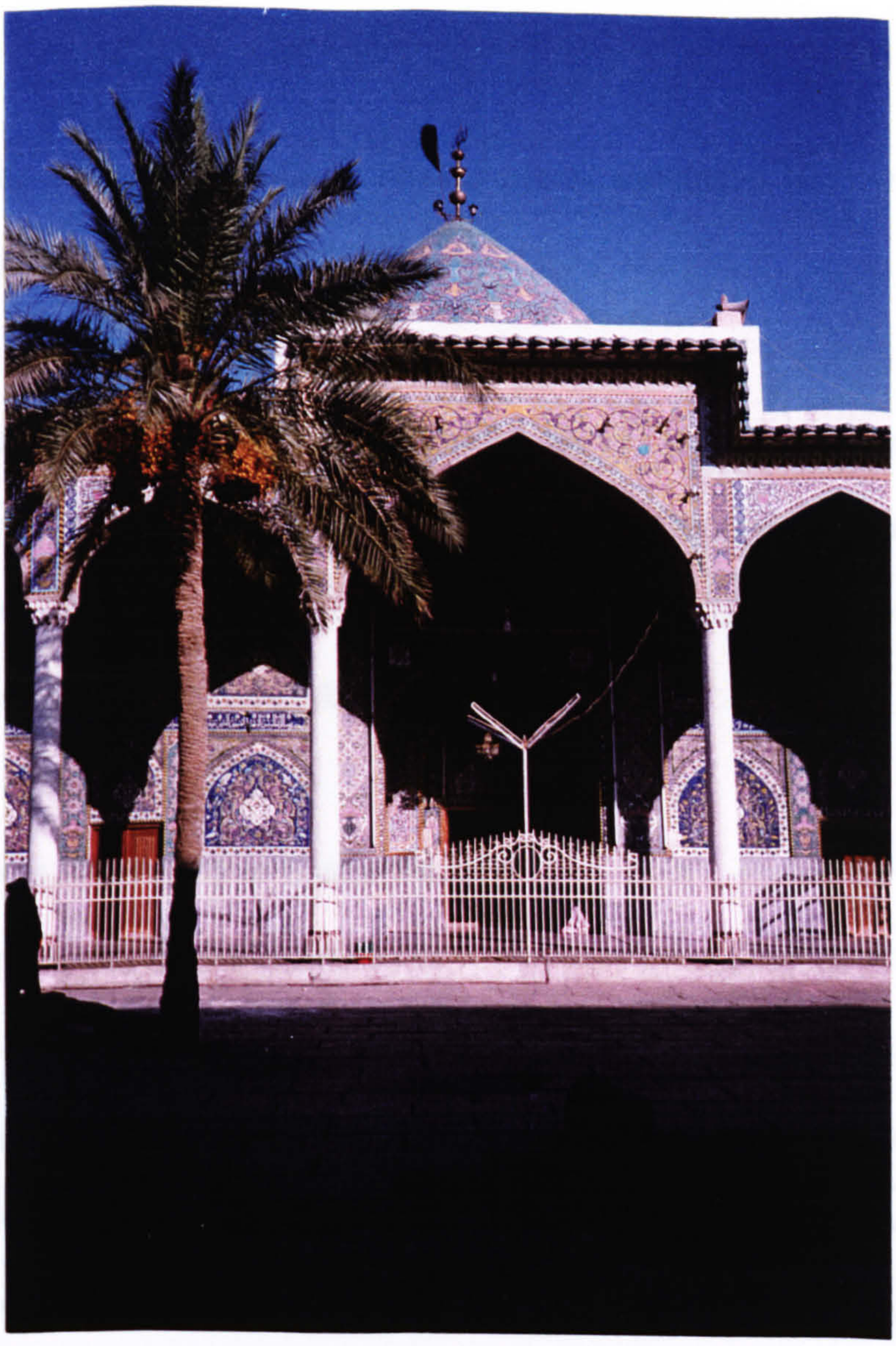
[2] TUMA, S. H., Karbala fil Thakira., p. 166.

covered by a brown coloured wooden box 2.5 metres long by 2 metres wide and enclosed in a gilded latticed box. The *dharih* room is surmounted by onion shaped dome which is 5.5 metres in diameter and about 7 metres in height above the ground level of the *dharih* building. The dome exterior surface is covered with *qashani* tiles and in between the tiles are Arabesque decorations from verses of the holy Qur'an while its top end terminates with a gilded metallic crescent. There is an opening in the middle part of each of the four walls of the *dharih* room which is 2 metres wide by 2.5 metres high and leads to the *rawaqs* which are open on each other and each *rawaq* is 2.5 metres wide (see plate no. 18).

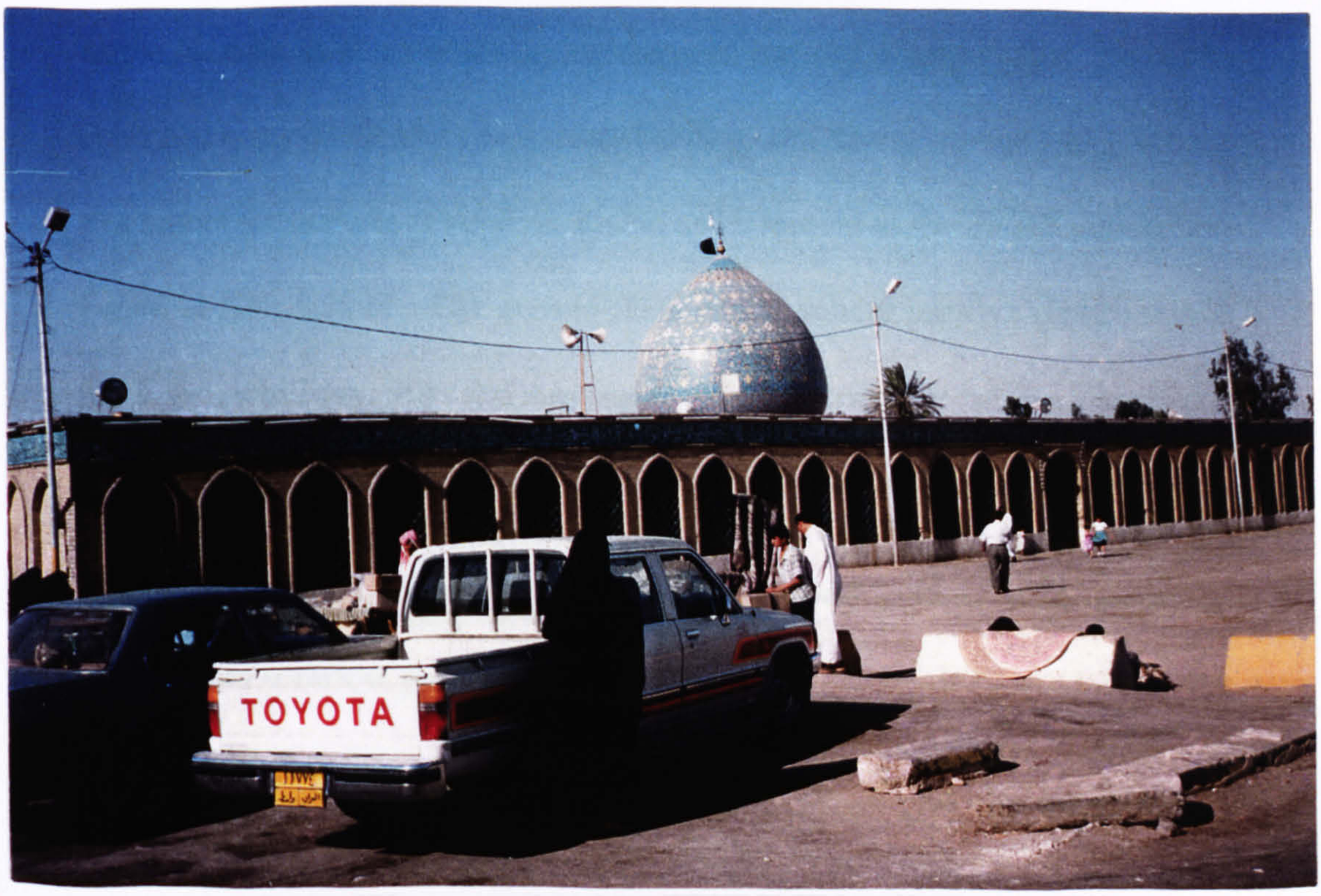
The *dharih* building is surrounded by an open courtyard which is itself surrounded by the shrine wall which has rooms attached to its left and right sides. There are two entrances to the shrine, one in the middle point of the right wall and the other at the end of the left wall.

3. Ahmed Ibn Fahad al-Hilli Shrine

This shrine embraces the grave of Jamalu Deen Abul Abbas Ahmed ibn Shamsul Deen Mohammed ibn Fahad al-Hilli al-Asadi, who was born in the city of Hilla in 756 A. H. (1355 A. D.) and was also brought up in this city. He was a religious scholar who was known to be ascetic and virtuous. He was for a period a teacher in the al-Zainabiya school in Hilla before his move to Karbala where he settled and founded its Islamic theological institute (*Hawza*). His move was an important factor in the spread of religious studies in similar institutions in Karbala and the



THE SHRINE OF AL- HUR IBN YAZID AL- RIYAHI - 1995.



THE SHRINE OF IMAM AWN - 1995.

city became as important as other centres of Islamic institutions (*Hawza*) such as Najaf, Hilla and Baghdad[1].

Sheikh Ahmed ibn Fahad al-Hilli died in 841 A. H. (1438 A. D.) and was buried in his home at *Bab al-Qibla* Street which is also known as *Abu al-Fahad* Street. The present shrine is a relatively new building built by the Islamic leader (*Marji'*) Ayatollah Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim[2].

Description of the Present Shrine Building

The plan of the shrine building is polygon shaped which covers an area of about 22.66 square metres. The building is surmounted by an onion shaped dome mounted on a polygon shaped neck which has windows distributed around it. The diameter of the dome is 4 metres and its height is 9 metres above the ground level. The exterior of the dome is covered with decorated and coloured *qashani* tiles. The shrine is surrounded by an open courtyard which is used by the pilgrims of Imam Hussain as a rest place during the peak seasons of pilgrimage. The open courtyard is surrounded by a two storey building with several rooms which is built as a school for students of religious studies and is known as the Sheikh Ahmed ibn Fahad al-Hilli School. The ground floor of this school has five classrooms in addition to a hallway, *iwan* and a mosque while the first floor has ten classrooms and this school is now used by the Islamic Progress Association (*Jam'iyat al-*

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[1] ABDUL RAZZAQ, M., Turathuna- A Quarterly Issued by Ahlulbayt Establishment for Revival of the Islamic Heritage, 16, Issue No. 3, Arabic Text, pp. 646, 648, 1409 A.H.(1988 A.D.).

[2] HIRZ AL-DEEN, M., Maraqid al-Ma'arif, Vol. 2, p. 76.

Nahdha al-Islamia) (see plate no. 19)[1].

4. Al-Sayyid Ahmed Abu Hashim Shrine

This shrine lies about 25 kilometres to the north west of Shfatha (Ain al-Tamr) town which is in the semidesert (*badia*) of Karbala and close to Rahalia district (*Nahyia*). It is located at Ra's al-Ain district and is also close to the *Wadi al-Aswad* and about 75 kilometres west of Karbala[2].

The real name of Al-Sayyid Ahmed Abu Hashim, who is locally known as Ahmed ibn Hashim, is Sayyid Sharaf al-Deen ibn Hashim who is a descendent of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (A. S.). He died in 745 A. H. (1345 A. D.)[3].

Description of the Present Shrine Building

The shrine building is rectangular in shape, which is 84.5 metres long by 45 metres wide. It incorporates the *dharih* building which occupies the central area of the shrine, is rectangular in shape and being 22.5 metres long by 14.5 metres wide and its height is 6 metres.

The *dharih* room lies in the middle of the *dharih* building surmounted by an onion

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[1] TUMA. S. H., Karbala fi al-Thakira, p. 392.
- HIRZ AL-DEEN, M., Maraqid al-Ma'arif, Vol. 2, pp. 77, 78.

[2] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 117.
- HIRZ AL-DEEN, M., Maraqid al-Ma'arif, Vol. 2, pp. 85, 86.

[3] HIRZ AL-DEEN, M., Maraqid al-Ma'arif, Vol. 2, pp. 85, 86.

shaped dome supported by eight columns which have square cross section whose side is 65 centimetres long. The diameter of the dome is about 7 metres and its height is about 10 metres above the ground level of the *dharih* building. The dome has 8 windows around its neck and each window is 1 metre high and also 1 metre wide. The exterior of the dome is decorated with the beautiful *qashani* tiles and at its top end is a metallic pole with spheres of different sizes attached to it. The *dharih* building is preceded by an *iwan* whose facade consists of three pointed arches, the middle one being higher than the other two and covered from the outside with *qashani* tiles. The top line of the external façades of the *dharih* building is covered with *qashani* tiles with scripts from the holy Qur'an decorated in Arabesque style. The *dharih* building is surrounded by a vast open courtyard which itself is surrounded on its four sides by a roofed *iwans* whose front is surmounted by pointed arches and are used as rest places by pilgrims (see plate no. 19)[1].

5. Al-Akhras Ibn al-Kadhim Shrine

This shrine lies on the outskirts of the holy city of Karbala in an area known as al-Ubiter which is one of the districts of Ghadhiriyat. It is located in the middle of a village road and about 12 kilometres away from the city centre of Karbala. The grave is that of *al-Akhras ibn al-Kadhim* who real name is Mohammed ibn Abi al-Fatih who is a descendent of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (A. S.) nicknamed *al-Kadhim*[2].

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12008, p. 21, London, 1996.

[2] HIRZ AL-DEEN, M., Maraqid al-Ma'arif, Vol. 2, p. 131.

AHMED IBN FAHAD AL- HILLY TOMB - 1995.

AHMED IBN HASHIM TOMB - 1995.

Description of the Present Shrine Building

The shrine building is of a simple construction. It was built by the residents of the area surrounding the shrine. The plan of the building is rectangular in shape which is 8.5 metres long by 7 metres wide while the height of the building is 4 metres. The rectangular shaped *dharih* room is in the middle of the shrine building whose length is 6.5 metres and its width is 4 metres. The grave lies in the centre of the room and is covered by a metallic and latticed box painted in green. This box is 3 metres long by 1.65 metres wide while its height is 2 metres. There are two short minarets in the shrine whose height is 1.5 metres above the roof level of the shrine building while the base of the minaret is square shaped whose side is half a metre and its upper section is cylindrical in shape with a diameter of 40 centimetres and terminates at the top with a small conical dome.

6. Imam Noah Shrine

Imam Noah real name is Abu Ayoub Noah ibn Darraj al-Nakha'i al-Kufi who died in 182 A. H. (798 A. D.) and is nicknamed as Imam Noah. Some sources mentioned that Noah was a judge in the eastern side of Kufa. Others have indicated that Noah was a judge for both Kufa and Basra who was appointed by the Abbasid Caliph Haroun al-Rashid but followed the judiciary rules of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.)[1].

[1] AL-BARAQI, S. H., Tarikh al-Kufa, Arabic Text, p. 215, Matba'at al-Haydaria, Najaf, Iraq, 1937.
- HIRZ AL-DEEN, M., Maraqid al-Ma'arif, Vol. 2, pp. 351, 352.

The shrine of Imam Noah lies on the outskirts of the city of Karbala within the residential quarters of the Saudi clan and on one of the tributaries of *al-Hussainiya* river which is in the district of al-Ubiter. It is also at a distance of about one kilometre from the *al-Akhras ibn al-Kadhim* shrine.

Description of the Present Shrine Building

The shrine building is of a simple construction. It was built by Sayyid Mahdi Nashmi al-Masoudi who is one of the residents of the surrounding area of the shrine. The plan of the building is square shaped whose side is 17 metres long while the height of the building is 3.6 metres. It includes an open courtyard and the entry to the shrine is from an arched entrance which is 2.4 metres high by 1.4 metres wide. The entrance leads to a circular room whose diameter is 4 metres where at the centre lies the tomb of Imam Noah. This room is surmounted by a dome 5.5 metres in diameter and 6 metres in height above the ground level of the tomb. There are two minarets at the entrance which are 1.25 metres high above the roof level of the building whereas the diameter of each minaret is half a metre.

7. Ibn al-Hamza Shrine

According to the plaque placed on the tomb, this shrine embraces the grave of Mohammed Ali ibn al-Hamza ibn al-Hassan ibn Ubaidullah ibn al-Abbas ibn al-Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (A. S.)[1].

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[1] HIRZ AL-DEEN, M., Maraqid al-Ma'arif, Vol. 2, pp. 55, 56.

However, there is another story which says that the grave belongs to Sheikh Mohammed Ali ibn Hamza al-Tousi who was a leading religious scholar (*Faqih*) of the fifth Hijri century and was also one of the disciples of Sheikh Mohammed ibn al-Hassan al-Tousi[1].

This shrine lies on the main road leading to the city of al-Hindiya (Twairij) and was built in 1330 A. H. (1912 A. D.).

Description of the Present Shrine Building

This is of simple construction, rectangular in shape which is 7.58 metres long by 6.60 metres wide surmounted by a dome whose diameter is about 2 metres and its height is also 2 metres above the roof level of the shrine building and its exterior is painted green.

The shrine building is preceded by a covered rectangular gallery (small *iwan*) 9.25 metres long by 3.5 metres wide and the top line of its front is covered with *qashani* tiles decorated in white with scripts from the holy Qur'an on a blue background. The building is surrounded by an open courtyard whose shape is an irregular polygon and next to it is a spacious house which belongs to the shrine.

[1] TUMA, S. H., Karbala fi al-Thakira, p. 167.

4.4.2 Maqams

The lexical origin of the word *al-maqam* is derived from the Arabic word "*Qiyam*" which literally means "standing up", while "*al-maqam*" refers to "the standing position". This word with such intent has been used in the holy Qur'an in the following verse: "*Fihi ayatun bayinat maqam Ibrahim*" which translates to "In it are signs manifest, (for example), the station of Abraham" i.e. the standing position of Abraham" which refers to the position of his feet while building the Sacred House of God (al-Kaaba) in the holy city of Makka. *Al-maqam* may also mean the place where once a notable person used to worship[1].

Thus, the designation of "*maqam*" was used to refer to places where notable persons such as "Prophets, Imams, pious people and companions of the prophet" were present, even if it was for a short period to perform prayers. Consequently, many Muslims want to perform their prayers inside the "*maqam*" to receive more blessing and prosperity. Some people assign the name "*maqam*" on a place where a tomb of a prophet or a pious person is buried. Although this is not considered wrong in the common understanding but, however, is not a general practice. There are many other "*maqams*" in the streets and alleys of the holy city of Karbala which may be noticed by the visitor but, these are not of the same fame and eminence as those already mentioned[2].

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[1] AL-WALI, T., Al-Masajid, p. 108.

[2] AL-SHEIKH AL-QAṬIFI, F.U, Al-Azhar Al-Arjiyya fi Al-A'thar Al-Farjiyya, Vol. 7, Arabic Text, p. 64, Najaf, 1964.

The architecture of the *maqams* buildings is of simple construction and they differ in size and area. Some are detached, such as the *maqams* of *al-Mahdi* and *tell al-Zainabiya*, and others occupy part of a building or attached to another building. It may consist of a small window to symbolise the *maqam* such as the *maqams* of *Kaf* (hand of) *al-Abbas* and *Ali al-Akbar*. Most of these *maqams* are built of *a'jur* and gypsum while the exterior of some of them are covered with *a'jur* and the *qashani* tiles. There were originally fourteen *maqams* in Karbala but the opening of new roads and the absence of work to preserve or maintain such buildings has contributed to the removal of some of the *maqams*. Others are now abandoned except for the two *maqams*, *al-Mahdi* and *tell al-Zainabiya*, which were renewed by the residents in recent years. The *maqams* known in Karbala, past and present are:

1- Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq

2- Imam Ali

3- Imam Musa ibn Ja'far

4- Ra' s al-Hussain

5- Um al-Banin

6- Ali al-Akbar al-Awwal

7- Ali al-Akbar al-Thani

8- Nakhal Maryam

9- Al-Hussain

10- Ibn Saad

11- Al-Kaf al-Ayman lil Abbas (al-Abbas right hand)

12- Al-Kaf al-Aysar lil Abbas (al-Abass left hand)

13- Imam al-Mahdi

14- Tel al-Zainabiya

However, the *maqams* of *Imam al-Mahdi* and *tell al-Zainabiya* are considered the most important among these in the holy city of Karbala.

1- Imam al-Mahdi Maqam

This is situated on the western bank of the present *al-Hussainiya* river at the entrance of Karbala from Baghdad and on the route leading to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq *maqam*. It is well known by pilgrims and was named after the Twelfth Imam, al-Mahdi (A. S.). It is believed that he performed prayers at this place and he then left the area[1].

Description of the Present Maqam

This building occupies a rectangular land with an area of about four hundred square metres and its entrance is positioned in the frontage of the building. This building incorporates pray hall for men which is situated to the right of the entrance. The hall is square shaped 7 metres long and 6.5 metres high above the ground level of the building surmounted by an onion shaped dome about 4 metres in diameter and about 17.5 metres in height above the ground level of the building. To the left of the entrance is the pray hall for women which is rectangular shaped

[1] TUMA, S.H., Karbala fil Thakira, p. 160.

18 metres long by 7 metres wide and 6.5 metres high. Next to this hall is the room occupied by the muezzin and a man in charge of the *maqam*. This room is rectangular in shape 5 metres long by 4 metres wide with a separate bathroom and a stairway. Next to the room is a roofed balcony overlooking an open courtyard that has an entrance opening from the outside. There is a small building connected to the courtyard which consists of a large dining room and a kitchen. Windows are distributed on the frontage of the building covered with white stone while its top line is decorated with coloured *qashani* tiles intervened with decorations of Arabesque style of verses from the holy Qur'an (see plate no. 20).

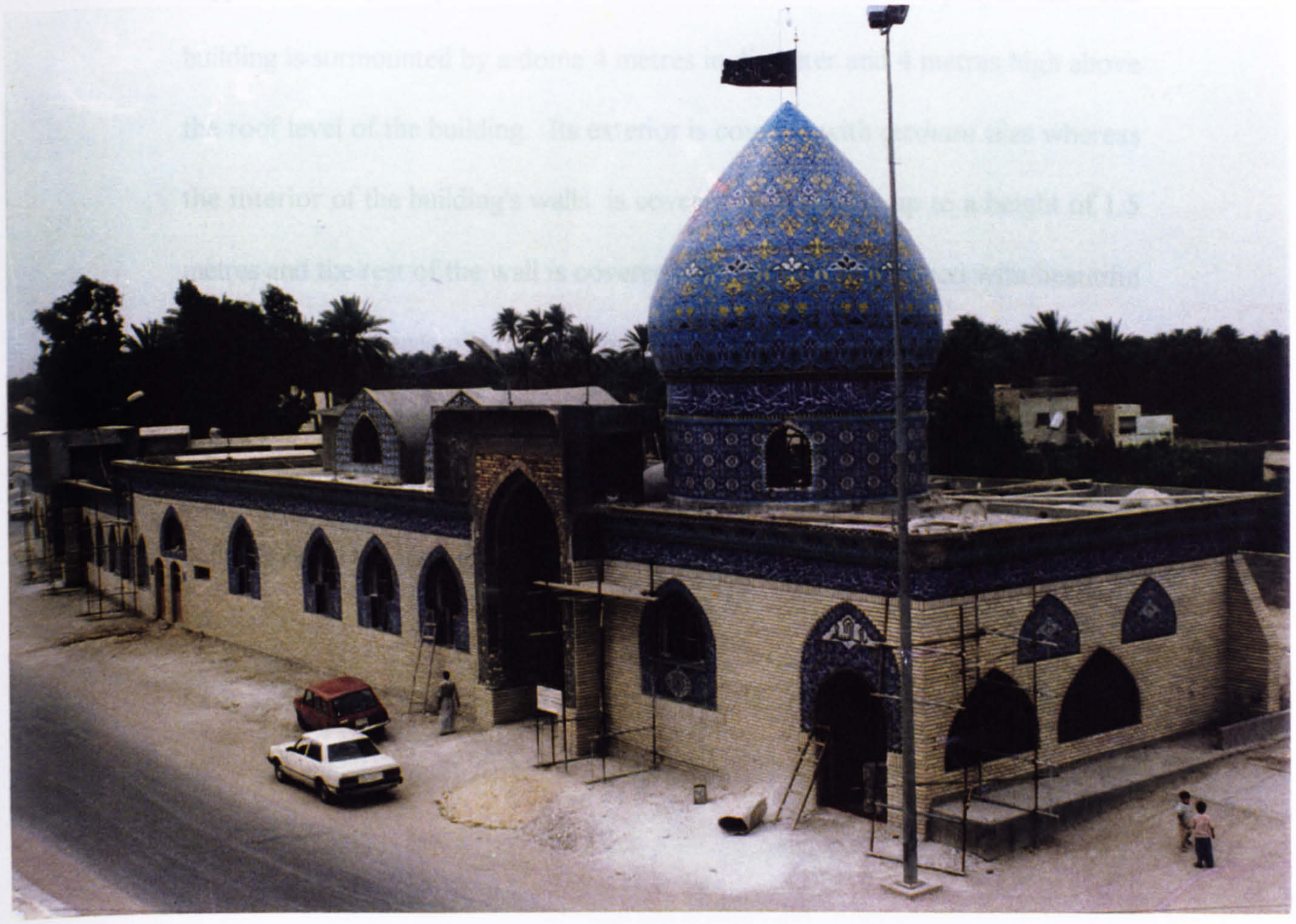
2- Tell al-Zainabiya Maqam

This is situated in the western side of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*, close to the al-Zainabiya Gate of Imam Hussain shrine and on a hill known as *tell al-Zainabiya*. It is believed that this hill once overlooked the site of the bodies of those killed in al-Taff event. At the end of this battle (Event), Sayyida Zainab al-Kobra (A. S.) walked on this site to search for the body of her brother Imam Hussain (A. S.) after his murder. Thus and as an honor, this site was named after her[1].

Description of the Tell al-Zainabiya Maqam

This building is 1.25 metres high above the pavement level and thus one has to climb few steps to reach its entrance. The building plan is rectangular which is 6.5

[1] TUMA, S.H., Karbala fil Thakira, p. 162.



MAQAM (SANCTUARY) OF AL-MAHDI

metres long (along the facade) by 4 metres wide and 4 metres high. The building consists of two parts, the frontal part embraces the symbolic position where Sayyida Zainab (A. S.) once stood whereas the rear is used as a prayer hall. The building is surmounted by a dome 4 metres in diameter and 4 metres high above the roof level of the building. Its exterior is covered with *qashani* tiles whereas the interior of the building's walls is covered with marble up to a height of 1.5 metres and the rest of the wall is covered with gypsum intervened with beautiful decorations of pieces of tiny sized mirrors. The facade exterior is also covered with marble up to a height of 1.5 metres above the ground level whereas the rest of the wall is covered with beautiful *qashani* tiles. The entrance at the front of the building has a wooden gate 2 metres high by 2 metres wide.

4.4.3 Al-Mukhaiyam

South-west of the *sahan al-Hussain on* the outskirts of the old town, there is the *Khaimehgah* or *al-mukhaiyam*, a small building which marks the site of Hussain's tent before the fatal battle[1].

The *mukhaiyam* building is also situated in a part of Karbala which was once called A'l-Eisa Quarter but at the end of 1272 A. H. (1886 A. D.) was renamed al-Mukhaiyam Quarter. However, some historical sources mentioned that up to 1217 A. H. (1802 A. D.) the present site of *al-mukhaiyam* was known as *Imam Zain al-Abideen maqam*[2].

This building is considered to be among the prominent historical and architectural marks of the holy city of Karbala. In 1217 A. H. (1802 A. D.), the explorer Abu Talib Khan during his journey to Karbala pointed at the *mukhaiyam* and said, "Quarter of a mile outside the city lies the *mukhaiyam* village and the *maqam* of *Imam Zain al-Abideen* (A. S.) where the wife Asif al-Dawla built a suitable building for this *maqam* and nearby, she also started the erection of a stable but this, however, was not completed due to the death of Asif al-Dawlah"[3].

Some historical references indicated that the present *mukhaiyam* building was built

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[1] NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, p. 537.
- TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 111.

[2] MUDDARIS, M.B., Shahr Hussain, p. 333.

[3] AL-ASFAHANI, Mirza Abu Talib Khan, Maseer Talibee, Indian Text, p. 283, India, 1227 A. H. (1812 A. D.).

by Madhat Pasha, the Ottoman *wali* (governor) of Baghdad, following his visit to the city of Karbala in 1285 A. H. (1868 A. D.) to be used as a guest house for the Qajari Sultan Nasir al-Din Shah, his cortège and army[1].

Description of the Present Mukhaiyam Building

The building plan is rectangular which is 52 metres long by 40 metres wide along the facade. The main gate is relatively high and is positioned in the middle of this facade having a height of 5 metres and surmounted by a pointed arch. This gate leads to the main entrance that is 8.7 metres long by 7.1 metres wide. The roof of the entrance is covered by a hemispherical ceiling 5.5 metres in diameter and about 8.4 metres high above the ground level of the entrance. This ceiling is decorated with tiny pieces of mirror and beautiful *qashani* tiles while the entrance walls are covered by *qashani* tiles. There are four descending footsteps at the end of the entrance leading to a hallway that is 11.5 metres long by 5.1 metres wide. Each of the two side walls of this hallway has eight arches constructed of *a'jur* and gypsum. The arch is 0.8 metres wide and 1 metre high above the ground level of the hallway. This hallway then leads to the main building of the Mukhaiyam and the latter is surrounded by a *sahan* from three sides. The *sahan* may be reached by descending three footsteps from either side of the hallway. Each of the two side wings of the *sahan* contains twelve *iwans* and each one is surmounted by a pointed arch whereas the *sahan* rear has seven *iwans* also surmounted by pointed arches. There is also a side gate leading to the *sahan* through a room. The main

[1] TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 112.

building is nearly polygon shaped, about 7.5 metres high, surmounted by a dome built of *a'jur* and gypsum which is 5.5 metres in diameter and about 8.5 metres high above the ground level of the building. The dome exterior is decorated with blue *qashani* tiles (see plate no. 21). There are also special places beside the inside walls of the building used by pilgrims for recitation of the holy Qur'an.

AL- MUKHAIYAM BUILDING - 1995.

4.5 Mosques

Apart from the two shrines of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and his brother al-Abbas (A. S.), the city of Karbala has also been known for its mosques that served in the past as illuminating centres of Islamic culture. The first mosque built in this city was Ra's al-Hussain Mosque, in 369 A. H. (980 A. D.). It was considered the oldest historical mosque in Karbala[1].

Living examples of artistic work and architectural competence are integrated in buildings of mosques and some remaining religious buildings in Karbala. The fame of some of these mosques are linked to the scholarly or religious roles played by them during certain successive Islamic rules in Iraq. Some mosques got importance and both political, cultural and social roles besides being centres of worship. Some of these mosques are still standing today in their original style. Others have completely lost its historical origins due to the architectural unplanned renewals and repairs. Other mosques were demolished and levelled by the Iraqi authorities in recent years who claimed it was necessary for urban planning purposes. This is although some of these buildings were considered among the splendours of Islamic architecture in Karbala[2].

The mosques in the city of Karbala are relatively small when compared with other

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[1] MAJALLAT HAWZA, Issue No. 6, Persian Text, p. 172, Maktab al-Tabligh al-Islami, Qum, Iran, 1966.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 270.

[2] SHAHRISTANI, DR. M.A., Majjalat Karbala, p. 3, Issue No. 12, 29/8/1991.

existing mosques in Baghdad. Its architectural style, however, maintained its traditional design of the Arabic-Islamic features adopted in the first mosques built in Iraq. Its plan consists of:

- A prayer hall whose ceiling is mounted on either marble, brick or wooden columns.

- *Rawaqs* perpendicular to the *Qibla* wall.

- Hallways parallel to the *Qibla* wall.

- Mihrab in the middle of the *Qibla* wall.

- An interior open *sahan* surrounded by *Bahous* or *rawaqs*.

- Washing area for *Wudhu* (ablution) at one corner of the *sahan*.

Some mosques in Karbala do not comprise an open *sahan* because of the small area occupied by these mosques especially those situated inside the old city and in the areas surrounding the holy shrines. Another noticeable feature of the mosques built in the old city is that they do not include minarets, which is believed to be due to the existence of minarets in the two holy shrines of Imam Hussain and his brother al-Abbas from which call to prayers was made.

The architecture of mosques in Karbala retained its speciality in using the available local building materials such as the *a'jur* that is unique in its flexibility in forming the beautiful decoration used with gypsum in covering the faces of the exterior walls of mosques and other religious building. Decorations with beautiful *qashani* were used on the covering of entrances, exterior walls, domes and minarets if existed, in most of the mosques in Karbala. The walls, columns and ceiling of the

prayer hall are covered by *qashani* and gypsum decorations that consisted of inscriptions of Qur'anic verses in the beautiful Kufi calligraphic style while others consisted of decorations of simple design. The mosque's buildings were not limited with the use of only local building materials but also included decorations with marble, coloured stones and the imported rare woods on the covering of most of these mosques.

The mosques are scattered in many places in Karbala, such that it can be said that no main street is without one, making the total number over a hundred in this city. The most important mosques in Karbala, some of which were demolished for what was to be opening of new roads in the city centre, are described below:

Ra's al-Hussain Mosque.

This was located on the side where the head of Imam Hussain is buried. It is also close to *Bab al-Sidra*, one of gates of Imam Hussain's shrine and at the position where Omar ibn Sa'd placed the Imam's head on the tenth day of *Muharram*, 61 A. H. (680 A. D.)[1].

This mosque was built on instructions from al-Buwaihid ruler Adhud al-Dawla when he renewed the building of the shrine of Imam Hussain in 369 A. H.

[1] SHEIKH AL- MUFID, al-Irshad, 3rd Edition, Arabic Text, p. 243, Mu'assaset al-A'lami lil Matbou'at, Beirut, Lebanon, 1399 A. H. (1979 A. D.).

(980 A.D.)[1].

The mosque was demolished together with other mosques and religious schools because of opening the circular road around *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* in 1948[2].

Umran ibn Shahin Mosque.

This was considered one of the oldest mosques and also a well known religious school in Karbala. It was built in 369 A. H. (980 A. D.) by Umran ibn Shahin, Amir of al-Bata'ih, and annexed to *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*. It played a big role in spreading the religious and cultural studies in Karbala. The mosque was demolished following the opening of the circular road around *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*[3].

Al-Sardar Hassan Khan Mosque.

This was considered one of the beauties of Islamic architecture in Karbala and was attached to the religious school known in his name. Part of the mosque and the school was demolished following the opening of the circular road around *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* while the other part was demolished in 1991[4].

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[1] MAJALLAT HAWZA, p. 172, Issue No. 6, 1966.
- TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 216.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A.J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 270.

[3] AL-MAJLISI, Bihar al-Anwar, p. 320, Vol. 42.
- AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D.,Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmiya fi Karbala, p. 292.

[4] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 270.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 218.

Al-Naṣiri Mosque.

This is one of the most important mosques to be built by al-Qajari ruler Naṣir al-Din Shah in 1276 A. H. (1860 A. D.). Its location is at the northern part of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* and attached to it. It was demolished and also its location hidden because of opening the circular road around the *rawdha*[1].

Mirza Shafi' Khan Mosque.

This mosque was built during the rule of Mirza Shafi' Khan who was one of the prime ministers of Iran in the Qajari period. It was he who gave instructions to build this mosque on a spot overlooking the Hnaidiya River when he paid a visit to Karbala in 1309 A. H. (1892 A. D.). There is a plaque at the entrance and decorated with *qashani* tiles. Inscriptions on this plaque shows that in 1319 A. H. (1901 A. D.), the building of the mosque was renewed by two brothers, Haj Ali and Haj Agha Jan. Next to this mosque is a private cemetery for the religious scholar Sayyid Hashim al-Hussaini al-Juhrumi al-Ha'eri who died in 1322 A. H. (1904 A. D.). His grave is surmounted by a dome covered with coloured *qashani* tiles but its upper section has fallen down[2].

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A.J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, p. 270.
- TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 218.

[2] AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmiya fi Karbala, p. 293.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 217.

Al-Agha Baqir al-Bahbahani Mosque.

This is considered among the smaller sized mosques in Karbala. It is situated next to the *Hindiya* school inside al-Za'farani Alley and close to *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*. The Agha Khan is regarded as the pioneer of the scholarly movement in this city during the Twelfth Hijri Century.

Sahib al-Hada'iq Mosque.

This is situated opposite the *Hindiya* School and al-Bahbahani Mosque. It was built by Sheikh Yousif al-Bahrani nicknamed *Sahib al-Hada'iq* who died in 1186 A. H. (1772 A. D.). It was rebuilt in the early eighties.

Sheikh Khalaf Mosque.

This is regarded as one of the most well known old mosques and is situated in *al-Sidra* street and within *Bab al-Salalma* Quarter. It was built by Sheikh Khalaf ibn A'skar al-Ha'eri who died in 1246 A. H. (1831 A. D.) and was renewed in 1371 A. H. (1952 A. D.). It was demolished because of widening of the *al-Sidra* Street during the mid seventies.

Al-Shahristani Mosque.

This lies close to *Bab al-Shuhada'*, one of the gates of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*.

It was built in 1189 A. H. (1775 A. D.) by Sayyid Mahdi al-Shahristani and in 1356 A. H. (1937 A. D.) was rebuilt. However, with the opening of the Pedestrian Street linking the two major holy shrines, this mosque was demolished in 1399 A. H. (1979 A. D.).

Sayyid Ali Naqi al-Ṭabaṭaba'i Mosque.

This is situated opposite the Salimiya School and close to the *al-Tujjar* Grand *souk*. It was built in 1210 A. H. (1796 A. D.) by Sayyid Ali al-Ṭabaṭaba'i, nicknamed as *Ṣaḥib al-Riyadh*, but following his death was named after his son Sayyid Ali Naqi al-Ṭabaṭaba'i. The mosque was renewed many times and finally in 1382 A. H. (1962 A. D.) was rebuilt similar to a modern style of design.

Al-Ardabiliya Mosque.

This is considered one of the old mosques in Karbala, lies on the road leading to ibn al-Ḥamza Shrine and includes a large prayer hall and side rooms. A number of notable scholars are buried in these rooms such as Ḥussain Ali Shah, religious leader of a Ṣufi sect, who died in 1232 A. H. (1817 A. D.), Mirza Naṣrallah Ṣadr al-Mamalik who died in 1285 A. H. (1868 A. D.), Mirza Moḥammed Hadi Ṣadr al-Mamalik who died in 1310 A. H. (1893 A. D.), Moḥammed Taqi Abdul Karim al-Tabrizi who died in 1332 A. H. (1914 A. D.) and Mirza Moḥammed Ali ibn Ridha al-Hamadani who died in 1293 A. H. (1876 A. D.).

Al-Hamidiya Mosque.

This mosque was built on instructions from the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid al-Thani and was demolished in 1915 A. D.. Part of its land was used to build the *Awqaf* Directorate of Karbala building at *al-Nahia* Street. The mosque occupies a relatively big open area and has a large prayer hall. It was rebuilt in 1961 A. D. and its name changed to *al-Hussaini* Mosque. A public library was added which is now known as Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib Library.

Al-Abbasia Mosque.

This mosque is of a simple construction situated in *al-Abbasia al-Gharbia* Quarter. It was built during the Ottoman period and renovated and repaired on many occasions. It is now under the control of *Awqaf* Directorate of Karbala.

Al-Tahrani Mosque.

This is situated inside *al-Najjarin souk* (Carpenter's Shops) and within *al-Abbasia al-Gharbia* Quarter. In 1243 A. H. (1828 A. D.), it was made *Waqf* (endowment) by Sayyid Salih al-Tahrani and since 1943 A. D. it came under the control of Awqaf Directorate of Karbala. It includes an open area with a fountain in the middle.

Al-Turuk Mosque.

This is also regarded as one of the smaller mosques in Karbala and is situated in *al-Abbasia al-Gharbia* Quarter at the end of *al-Najjarin souk*. It was made *Waqf* by Mohammed Ja'far al-Turuk during the Ottoman rule and since 1943 became under the control of *Awqaf* Directorate of Karbala.

Al-Haj Nasrallah Mosque.

This is situated at *al-Abbas* street and close to the government building (*Seray*). It was built in 1343 A. H. (1925 A. D.) by Haj Nasrallah ibn Haj Abdul Karim. The decorated plaque placed at its entrance states that the guardian of the mosque Kadhim Haj Hassan renewed its building in 1382 A. H. (1962 A. D.).

Mahi Klaib Mosque.

This is situated inside *al-Alaawi souk* and *Bab al-Najaf* Quarter. It was made *Waqf* in 1299 A. H. (1882 A. D.) by Haj Mahi ibn Klaib who is the grandfather of a family in Karbala known by A'l-Mahi al-Jailawi. This mosque has at one time collapsed and was rebuilt in recent years by Haj Majid al-Abayechi.

Sayyid Hashim Fatehallah Mosque.

This is situated in *al-Nahia* street within *Bab al-Khan* Quarter and is also

considered as one of the smaller mosques in Karbala. In 1322 A. H. (1904 A. D.), it was built and made *Waqf* by Sayyid Hashim Fatehallah A'l-Tuma.

Al-Safi Mosque.

This is situated close to *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* at the entrance of *al-Hussain souk* and is considered one of the well known mosques in Karbala. It was built in 1329 A. H. (1911 A. D.) by Jawad Mahdi al-Safi but was demolished when in 1980 A. D. a new pedestrian street was opened linking the two major holy shrines.

Al-Shahid al-Thani Mosque.

This is situated in al-I'kaisa Alley within *Bab al-Salalma* Quarter. It is a small and old mosque and was built and named, as a tribute, after Sheikh Zain al-Din al-Amily, nicknamed *al-Shahid al-Thani*, who was martyred in 965 A. H. (1558 A. D.).

Al-Mukhaiyam Mosque.

This is among the smaller mosques in the city and is situated in *al-Mukhaiyam souk*, on the right side of the route leading to *al-Mukhaiyam* Square. Its building was renewed in 1380 A. H. (1339 A. D.). The mosque has a simple front made of *a'jur* whereas its entrance is decorated with the coloured *qashani* tiles interposed with inscriptions of verses from the holy Qur'an.

Al-Karama Mosque.

This is situated at the end of *al-Hussain souk* on the road leading to *Bab al-Salalma* Quarter and at *Bab al-Buwaiba*. It was built following efforts by Sayyid Mohammed Ali al-Eshaiqir and was renewed in 1388 A. H. (1968 A. D.). Its entrance is decorated with inscriptions and covered with coloured *qashani* tiles[1].

[1] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, pp. 217- 223.
- AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmiya fi Karbala, pp. 293- 297.

4.6 Hussainiyat

The term *hussainiyat* is the plural of the Arabic word *hussainiya* that refers to buildings named after Imam Hussain (A. S.). In it, Muslims take part in mourning ceremonies (Ta'a*zi* or *Ma'tim*) of the martyrdom of the Imam. This is especially held every year during the first ten days of the holy month of *Muharram*. Additionally, the buildings are used to perform Muslim's daily prayers (*Salah*) and religious gatherings (*Majalis*) in remembrance of *Ahlul Bait* (A. S.).

The origin of these *hussainiyat* goes back to the First Hijri Century and more precisely to the period of al-Mukhtar ibn Ubaida al-Thaqafi when he was ruler at Kufa. These places were first founded to describe inside them the affliction and suffering of Imam Hussain (A. S.) on the tenth day of *Muharram* (*Ashura*). They were transformed to become centres for commemorating this occasion[1].

According to historical sources, Mu'iz al-Dawla in 352 A. H. (963 A. D.) and all other Buwaihid rulers after him attached special importance to the holding of mourning ceremonies (*Ma'atim*) for Imam Hussain. They also organised processions where people used to come out in groups (*Mawkib*) outside their homes. Women usually used to come out at night and men during daytime. The men used to walk bareheaded and barefooted to show their sympathy and grief for the martyrdom of Imam Hussain.

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[1] AL-KIRBASI, M.S., Muqadamat Mu'jam al-Mashar'i; al-Hussainiya, Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Hussainiya, In Print, 1997.

Mourning ceremonies (*Ta'azi*) were also held in other countries such as in Egypt during the Faṭimi period, Aleppo in Syria during the rule of Saif al-Dawlah al-Hamdani, Iran during the Safavi period and other places in India and Turkish speaking states. The ceremonies were held in buildings that were called '*Ḥussainiyat*' by the Arab Muslims, '*Imam Bara*' by the Indian Muslims and '*Ma'tim Seray*' by the Iranian Muslims. Other names were also used such as '*Ma'atim*', '*Ta'azi al-Hussain*' or '*al-Nadi al-Hussaini*'. Specific places and fixed days in the year were used for holding these *Ta'azi* especially during the months of *Muḥarram* and *Safar*[1].

Some sources mention that the Iranians and the Indian Muslims played a role in developing the buildings of *Ḥussainiyat*. They were built in Iraq as in their countries and people made many *waqfs* (endowments) for this purpose. They also appointed a supervisor and a guardian for each one. This development is clearly shown in the style and plans of these buildings. The *Ḥussainiya* now includes open *saḥan* surrounded by the pilgrims rooms. The speaker's platform (*Manbar*) was added in the prayers hall where the daily prayers are held collectively (*Jama'a*). Thus, these developments led to different functions from one *Ḥussainiya* to another according to its size and perfection and depending on the position of its undertaker[2].

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[1] AL-SHAHRISTANI, H. D., Nahdhat al-Hussain, Arabic Text, p. 175, Manshurat al-Ridha, Maṭba'at Amir, Qum, Iran, 1363 A. H. (1944 A. D.).

[2] AL-AMIN, S. M., Khiṭaṭ Jabal Amil, 1st Edition, Arabic Text, p. 181, al-Dar al-A'lamiya lil Matbou'at, Beirut, 1403 A. H. (1984 A. D.).

The *hussainiya*, in addition to being a place of worship, is also used to hold lectures, social events and celebrations especially on religious occasions. It is frequently used as a mosque to perform daily prayers. Some have large halls and big rooms that are utilised for studies and research work[1].

In certain *hussainiyat*, part of the building is assigned as a residence quarter for students of religious studies and includes dinning hall and other utilities. Thus, it has become very similar to religious institutes. Some *hussainiyat* are designed to host both men and women by either allocating a separate meeting hall for each of them or by having them on different floors. Most of the *hussainiyat* in Karbala were built from contributions of natives of other Iraqi cities who normally use it when they visit Karbala during the visitation season. This is especially true during the annual ceremonies on the first ten days of the holy month of *Muharram* and on the fortieth (*Arba'een*) day of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and on other occasions.

One of the drawbacks of the *hussainiyat* built by natives of other cities in Karbala is that they remain closed for most of the year and are not used for any other purpose except during these religious occasions.

The starting point for the *hussaini* Processions (*Mawakib*) is from the location of the *hussainiyat* and participants are not limited to residents of the city of Karbala

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[1] AL-SHAROUDI, N.D., Al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, p. 291.
- TUMA, S.H., Turath Karbala, p. 224.

and the surrounding areas but pilgrims coming from other Iraqi cities and some Muslim countries also take part.

The buildings of *Hussainiyat* are considered religious buildings and therefore, possess special architectural features and styles. They usually incorporate a large open courtyard which in most cases has in its centre either a pond and a fountain or a garden planted with many trees. The yard is surrounded by the meeting halls, rooms, prayer hall and other utilities. The upper floor has rooms and other related utilities which are frequently used as study rooms and bedrooms.

The buildings of *Hussainiyat* in Karbala have maintained their Islamic architectural style. Local building materials that is plentiful have been used in these buildings such as the local clay brick (*a'jur*) which forms the most beautiful decorations on arches, domes, vaults and other building elementss which is a characteristic of the religious buildings. The modern *Hussainiyat* built after the fifties employed other building materials such as cement and steel bars but nevertheless, it preserved its Islamic architecture. The interior walls and ceilings of *Hussainiyat* are decorated by gypsum and *qashani* tiles and interposed with inscriptions of verses from the holy Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet (PBUH).

The most will known *Hussainiyat* in the Muslim world are:

1- Dalan Hussainiya (The *Hussainiya* Court):

This was built in 1052 A. H. (1642 A. D.) by one of the notable businessmen on a land with an area of 8450 square metres in the old city of Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh now[1].

2- Al-Asifia Hussainiya:

This is considered one of the most important mark of Islamic architecture in India. It was built by Asif al-Dawla, the fourth king of the State of Awhad, in his capital Lucknow who ruled between 1189- 1212 A. H. (1775- 1798 A. D.)[2].

3- Sheikh Hussain al-Asfour Hussainiya:

This was built in Bahrain in 1216 A. H. (1801 A. D.) by Sheikh Hussain al-Asfour. He also built next to it a school for teaching religious studies[3].

4- Al-Hayderiya Hussainiya in Kadhumia:

This is considered the most well known *hussainiya* in Iraq that was built in 1297 A. H. (1863 A. D.) in the city of Kadhumia near Baghdad by Mushir al-Mulk

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[1] AL-KIRBASI, M.S., Madinat al-Hussain, Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Hussainiya, In Print, 1997.

[2] MAJALLAT LUGHAT AL-ARAB AL-BAGHDADIYA, Issue No. 4, Arabic Text, p. 300, April 1931 A. D.

[3] MAJALLAT AL-MAWSIM, Issue No. 11, Arabic Text, p. 911, Dar al-Mawsim lil Ilam, Beirut, 1990 A. D.

Mirza Nasrallah Khan. It includes a library which is rich in valuable Islamic references and religious books[1].

There were many *hussainiyat*, both old and new, scattered in different parts of Karbala and vary in size. All were demolished, except for *hussainiya* Faiydhi, after March, 1991 by the Iraqi authorities who did not leave any remains of them[2].

Below are the most important *hussainiyat* that were in existence in Karbala:

1- Al-Hayderiya Hussainiya (previously called *al-Tahraniya*):

This was built on a land perviously occupied by *al-Pasha Khan*. This *khan* was built in 1127 A. H. (1715 A. D.) by the Ottoman *wazir* (Minister) Hassan Pasha to host the pilgrims of Imam Hussain (A. S.). It was situated opposite *Bab al-Raja'*, one of the gates of *al-rawdha al-hussainiya*. In 1368 A. H. (1953 A. D.), a group of Iranian merchants from Tehran purchased this land from Baghdad *Awqaf* Directorate. Also, merchants from Iraq and Kuwait paid further contributions towards its building. This *hussainiya* was originally intended to serve all the pilgrims of Karbala and its shrines. Contrary to the original agreement which proposed using a common name for the *hussainiya* to imply hosting all pilgrims, it was named *al-hussainiya al-Tehraniya* after its

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[1] MAJALLAT AL-TARIQ AL-ISLAMI, Issue No. 56, Arabic Text, p. 39, Beirut.

[2] UNITED NATIONS, Economic and Social Council, E/CN.4/1993/62, pp. 47 - 52, 6 January, 1993.

completion[1].

The plan of the *Hussainiya* is rectangular in shape and the total area occupied is about 2400 square metres. The building consisted of three floors. The basement was used for various social events and included a dinning room. The ground floor had a large meeting hall used for celebrations, religious talks (*Majalis*) and performing daily prayers. Both floors, ground and first, had a common ceiling in the middle area. The first floor contained 160 rooms with toilets to accommodate the pilgrims. The rooms were preceded by a hallway which overlooks the ground floor.

2- Faydhi Hussaini (Qasir Saifi):

This *Hussainiya* which belongs to the Buhra sect is cosidered the largest building in Karbala after the two holy shrines of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and his brother al-Abbas (A. S.). It has two entrances, the main one which is in the front of the building opens on al-Abbas street and the other one is in the rear of the building. The plan of the *Hussainiya* is rectangular in shape with a total area of about 10,000 square metres having a large open courtyard in the middle and a mosque in the centre of the yard. The yard is surrounded by 400 rooms distributed in two floors and each room has a small kitchen and a bathroom.

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[1] MUDDARIS, M. B., Shahre Hussain, pp. 323, 324.

3- Al-Esfahaniya Hussainiya:

This was situated along *al-Qibla* street (also called *Abul Fahad* street). It was built in 1379 A. H. (1960 A. D.) by natives of Esfahan city in Iran and thus derived its name from its contributers. The plan was rectangular in shape with a total area of about 2,000 square metres. It included two large open courtyards with a fountain in the middle of each of them, that were sometimes used for *Wudhu* (ablution). The building was in two floors containing 400 rooms with utilities and also a large meeting hall used for holding religious gatherings (*Majalis*) and performing daily prayers.

4- Sayyid Mohammed Salih Hussainiya:

This was built in 1344 A. H. (1926 A. D.) by Haj Sayyid Mohammed Salih al-Ballourforoush who was the deputy undertaker of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*. It was situated at *al-Mukhaiyam* street and was primarily built to accommodate the pilgrims of Imam Hussain (A. S.). It was a two storey building in which the ground floor had a large *sahan* and a large prayer hall whereas the first floor consisted of accommodation quarter and a library. It was made *Waqf* (endowment) by Sayyid Abdul Hussain A'l-Tuma who was the undertaker of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*.

5- Haj Menen Hussainiya:

This was situated on the road leading to al-Hindiya (Twairij) town and was built in 1345 A. H. (1927 A. D.) by Haj Menen ibn Haj Flayeh who was a native of Hilla city. It was intended to accommodate all pilgrims of Imam Hussain (A. S.). In 1377 A. H. (1958 A. D.), the building was renewed by Haj Flayeh.

6- Al-Mazendarani Hussainiya:

This *hussainiya* was situated behind *al-Mukhaiyam* building and was built in 1372 A. H. (1953 A. D.) by Sheikh Mohammed Mahdi al-Mazenderani as stated on a decorated plaque with *qashni* and placed on the gate of the *hussainiya*.

7- Al-Askoui' al-Ha'eri Hussainiya:

This *hussainiya* lies on the entrance of al-Damad Alley. It was built in 1345 A. H. (1927 A. D.) by al-Mirza Musa al-Askoui' al-Ha'eri. It included a public library known as al-allama al-Ha'eri library. The *hussainiya* had one floor with a large courtyard in the middle and surrounded by rooms[1].

[1] AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, pp.297, 298 - TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, pp. 224, 225.

4.7 Religious Schools

The city of Karbala held an important position as a distinguished educational centre in the Islamic world which played a significant role in various historical periods both in intellectual and religious matters.

The most important feature associated with this city is the unique traditional style of religious studies, taught in groups and known as *halaqat* (rings). This method is still practised today in most centres of Islamic studies, better known as *hawzat*, of the various religious cities of the Islamic world, as in the case of al-Nidhamia, al-Atabikia and al-Mustansiriya schools in Baghdad, al-Azhar al-Shareef in Cairo, Jami' al-Zaitouna and Jami' al-Qurawiyeen in Tunisia.

The studies were initially conducted in the galleries, open courtyards and rooms of the two shrines of Imam Hussain and al-Abbas. The houses of the *ulama'* (religious scholars) frequently had large rooms where lectures on Islamic studies were delivered. Many scholars (*ulama'*) completed their studies following this method of teaching. They specialised in either one or more of the following: *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *usul* (fundamentals), philosophy, medicine, astronomy, Arabic grammar, Arabic literature and Qur'anic sciences[1].

Islamic schools were founded at the beginning of the Buwaihid rule of Iraq and

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[1] LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, Issued by Karbala Province, Muhafadhet Karbala bain el Turath wal Mu'asera, Arabic Text, p. 101, Karbala, 1974.
- AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, p. 277.

Iran. *Fiqh* of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A. S.) was taught by such schools in all the Muslim countries under their rule, especially in those cities where the shia were in majority. The first such school to be founded in Iraq was called *al-Madrasa al-Adhudiya* and was situated in Karbala. It was built by Adhud al-Dawla al-Buwaihi following his visit to the city in 369 A. H. (980 A. D.) who also renewed the shrine building of Imam Hussain (A. S.). Its location was next to *Masjid Ra's al-Hussain*, also built by Adhud al-Dawla that was close *Bab al-Sidra* which is one of the gates of Imam Hussain shrine.

This school continued until the Safavid rule who took good care of it and gave it their attention. After the decline of the Safavid dynasty, the school turned into ruins. It was finally demolished in 1354 A. H. (1935 A. D.) to make way for a new street built around the shrine of Imam Hussain (A. S.).

In 371 A. H. (982 A. D.), another school was built in Karbala by Adhud al-Dawla next to the smaller *sahan* which itself was previously built by him. He annexed this *sahan* to the eastern side of the larger *sahan* of Imam Hussain shrine. The smaller embraced the tombs of the Buwaihid Sultans. However, this smaller *sahan* and school were both demolished on 24/11/1948[1].

Historical sources mentioned that the founding of Islamic schools goes back to the Saljuks period who ruled Iraq after the Buwaihid. It adds that they were the first

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[1] MAJALLAT HAWZA, Issue No. 6, Arabic Text, pp. 171- 172, Maktab al - Tabligh al-Islami, Qum, Iran, 1966.
- AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Hac'r al-Hussain, p. 177.

to build such establishments and were used both as a place for performing prayers and as educational centres. According to these sources, the first such school to be built by the Saljuks in Iraq was *al-Madrasa al-Nidhamia* in Baghdad. It added that it was built in 459 A. H. (1067 A. D.) by Nidham al-Mulk who was a *wazir* (minister) for the Saljuks Sultans Alb Arsalan and his son Melikshah[1].

By comparing the two dates mentioned by the above two sources, it appears that *al-Madrasa al-Adhudiya* was built almost 90 years before *al-Madrasa al-Nidhamia*. Therefore, it can be considered the first Islamic school to be built in Iraq[2].

During his visit to Karbala in 727 A. H. (1327 A. D.), the well known traveller Ibn Battuta pointed out to the existence of a great school and a 'hospitable corner' where food was offered to the incoming and outgoing travellers. The school mentioned by him was known as '*Jami' ibn Shahin*', attached to the shrine building of Imam Hussain. An increasing number of students of *Ilm* (Islamic studies) and ethics used to attend this mosque which was converted to an Islamic school.

The corner mentioned by Ibn Battuta was known as '*Dar al-Siyada*', built by the Mongol Sultan Mahmoud Gazan Khan who entailed it as endowment for the

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[1] NAJI, DR. A. J., Dirasat fi Tarikh al-Mudun al-Arabia al-Islamia, Arabic Text, p. 305, University of Basrah Press, Iraq, 1986.
- AL-WELEY, SHEIKH T., al-Masajid fil Islam, p. 84.
- BAHNESI, DR. A., al-Fan al-Islami, 1st Printing, Arabic Text, p.123, Dar Itlas lil Dirasat wal Tarjama wal Nasher, Damascus, 1986.

[2] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12396, p. 21, London, 1997.

benefit of the poor, indigent and wayfarer[1].

The developments in the intellectual and religious movement in the Twelfth Hijri century and its expansion with the increase in the number of students, especially those coming from various Muslim countries, had led to the spread of Islamic schools in Karbala[2].

The schools started to progress very quickly and it had its own distinctive characteristics and developments with regards to independence in building and design, updating of curriculum and integration of the students' residence quarters. The teaching methods in schools were different from those adopted in mosques (teach-in) and sessions in houses. Thus, these schools became the dedicated places for Islamic studies. Part of the school building is used as a residence quarter for the students. Thus, the overall building compound can be considered as a self contained unit[3].

The Islamic schools in Karbala possess unique architectural attributes and features consistent with the aim for which it was established. Its building plan represents an architectural style well known in Iraq, called '*al-Hirah style*' after the town of Hirah near Kufa. This style assigns the open courtyard primary position in the

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[1] IBN BATTUTA, Rihlat Ibn Battuta, p. 233.
- AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, pp. 42- 43.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 288.

[2] AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, pp. 277- 278.

[3] LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, Issued by Karbala Province, Muhafadhet Karbala bain el Turath wal Mu'asera, Arabic Text, p. 101, Karbala, 1974.

plan while the halls, rooms, prayer hall, entrances and hallways are placed around the yard. Thus, all utilities are directed towards the open courtyard (*sahan*) of the school. This consistency followed in the building of Islamic schools indicates systemised work in Islamic buildings and use of the method of architectural planning dictated by the local environment and social requirements. In most school buildings, there is a pool with a fountain in its centre that is sometimes used for ablution (*Wudhu*). There may also be one or more trees in the middle area of the yard. The exterior incorporates the doors leading to the building and sometimes windows. Different decorating elements of *a'jur* were used on the exterior of some Islamic school buildings that covered parts of the walls and, thus, has given it a beautiful appearance.

Local clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum were used in building the Islamic schools in Karbala. Its interiors were covered with decorating elements made of gypsum and coloured *qashani* tiles intervened with calligraphic writings from the holy Qur'an. The windows incorporate a combination of various decorating work by rare wood and beautiful stained glass[1].

The Islamic schools used to be widespread in different parts of Karbala such that its number reached twenty five schools but, unfortunately, most of them disappeared. Some were demolished to make way for new streets especially in the area linking the two shrines and around them, and others turned into ruins as a result of negligence and absence of maintenence and restoration work.

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12396, p. 21, London, 1997.

In addition to the school of Islamic studies, there were other schools built by the citizens of Karbala, the Iranian and Ottoman authorities, and the Indian Muslims where Arabic was taught in addition to one or more languages for which these schools are specialised. The most well known schools are *al-Madrasa al-Ja'fariya al-Oula* which was built in 1332 A. H. (1914 A. D.), *al-Madrasa al-Hussainiya* which was built in 1327 A. H. (1909 A. D.) and *al-Madrasa al-Rashidiya* which was built in 1328 A. H. (1910 A. D.)[1].

Since the establishment of the modern Iraqi state in 1921 A. D., the government built schools whose responsibility was to provide education to the citizens of Karbala alongside the private religious schools[2].

The most important schools of Islamic studies in Karbala are:

1- Madrasat al-Sardar Hassan Khan

This school is one of the most important religious and historical institution in Karbala. It was built by Sardar Hassan Khan al-Qizwini in 1180 A. H. (1767 A. D.) and is situated in the north eastern corner of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*. A generation of great scholars (*ulama'*), Islamic jurist (*faqih*) and Islamic intellectuals graduated from this school such as the great Islamic reformer Jamalu Deen al-Afghani and the great scholar (*a'lim*) Sheikh Sharif al-Ulama' al-Mazendarani.

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[1] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, pp. 208 - 211.

[2] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12396, p. 21, London, 1997.

This school contained 70 rooms whose walls were covered with beautiful decorative work and a line on the top decorated with calligraphic writings from the holy Qur'an. Work started to demolish part of this school on 18/11/1948. However, its ruins lasted until March 1991[1].

2- Madrasat al-Sayyid al-Mujahid

This school is situated in *souk al-Tujjar al-Kabeer* (the grand merchants market) and near the tomb of Sayyid Mohammed al-Mujahid al-Tabataba'i. It was built in 1270 A. H. (1854 A. D.), according to its endowment will. This school was demolished in 1980 A. D. to make way for the new Pedestrian Street linking the two holy shrines[2].

3- Madrasat Sadr al-A'dham al-Nouri

This is considered one of the most important institutions of Islamic studies in Karbala and is situated west of the *sahan* of *Imam Hussain shrine*. It was built by *allama* Sheikh Abdul Hussain al-Tahrani which was financed from one third of the inheritance left over by al-Amir al-Mirza Taqi Khan al-Sadr al-A'dham who died in 1268 A. H. (1852 A. D.). This school was demolished as a result of opening al-Ha'er street around *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*. One of its notable teachers were Sheikh Abul Qassim al-Khoei who died in 1364 A. H. (1945 A. D.)

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 177 - 270.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, pp. 202, 203.
- MAJALLAT AL-HABL AL-MATIN, Issue No. 4, Arabic Text, p. 21, 1910.

[2] AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, p. 279.

and the poet Sayyid Abdul Wahab al-Wahab who died in 1322 A.H. (1904 A.D.)[1].

4- Al-Madrasa al-Zainabiya

This school was one of the flourishing institutions of Islamic studies during different periods. It was so named because of its proxionity to Bab al-Zainabiya, a gate of Imam Hussain shrine from the western side. The school was demolished following the opening of a new street around *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* in 1368 (1948 A. D.). One of its notable teachers were Sheikh Mohammed al-Khateeb who died in 1380 A. H. (1961 A. D.) and the poet Sheikh Ja'far al-Hir who died in 1347 A. H. (1928 A. D.)[2].

5- Al-Madrasa al-Hindiya

This school was until recently one of the most well known institutions of Islamic studies in Karbala. It is situated in al-Za'farani Alley, near *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* and was built at the end of the thirteenth Hijri century. It consisted of two floors, contained 27 rooms and included a public library known as *al-Maktaba al-Ja'fariya*. The school used to publish a magazine by the name *'Ajwibet al-Mesa'il al-Deenia'*. A noticable number of great Islamic scholers (*ulama'*) and jurists (*faqih*) graduated from this school. One of its well known teachers was Sheikh Ja'far al Rashti[3].

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain p. 177.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 203.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, DR. A. J., Tarikh Karbala wa Ha'er al-Hussain, pp. 177 - 270.

[3] AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, p. 281.

6- Madrasat al-Badqouba (also known as al-Turuk)

This was one of the well known schools in Karbala and was built in 1270 A. H. (1854 A. D.). It was situated in Damad Alley, included a public library which contained valuable books and had 30 rooms. Among its teachers were Sheikh Mohammed al-Shahroudi and *allama* Sheikh Mohammed al-Kirbasi. This school was demolished when the new pedestrian street was opened between the two holy shrines in 1980. The two periodicals '*Majallat Menabi' al-Thaqafa al-Islamia and Majallat Mebadi*' al-Islam(in English) used to be published by the school[1]

7- Madrasat al-Buqa'

This school was situated in *Imam Ali* street next to the tomb of Sayyid Mohammed al-Mujahid al-Tabataba'i and was built in the middle of the thirteenth Hijri century. It consisted of two floors and contained 20 rooms. Notable scholars (*ulama'*) and Islamic jurists graduated from this school, among them were *allama* Sayyid Muhsin al-Kishmiri, *allama* Sheikh Abdul Rahim al-Qummi and *allama* Sayyid Murtadha al-Tabataba'i. The magazine '*Majallat Sawt al-Mubelligheen*' used to be published by this school. The school was also demolished in 1980 after the opening of the new pedestrian street linking the two holy shrines[2].

8- Al-Madrasa al-Salimiya

This school is situated in the alleyway of the mosque of Sayyid Ali Naqi al-

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[1] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 204.
- AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, p. 282.

[2] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 204.

Tabataba'i. It was built by Haj Mohammed Salim Khan al-Shirazi in 1250 A. H. (1834 A. D.) and renewed by the *marji'* Sayyid Mahdi al-Shirazi in 1370 A. H. (1951 A. D.). The school was built on a small area, consisted of two floors and contained 13 rooms. Among its notable teachers were *allama* Sheikh Yousif al-Khorsani, and *allama* Sayyid Hassan al-Shirazi. The two magazines '*al-Akhlaq wal Adaab*' and '*Dikrayat al-Ma'soumeen*' were published by this school.

9- Al-Madrasa al-Mahdiya

This school is situated in the alleyway next to *diwan* (guestroom) *al-Sadda A'l Rushdi* and was built in 1284 A. H. (1867 A. D.) by Sheikh Mehdi bin Sheikh Ali Bin Sheikh Ja'far Kashif al-Ghita'. It consisted of two floors, part of which was used to accomodate the students of Islamic studies, some of whom were those from other Muslim countries. Among its notable teachers were *allama* Sheikh Ali al-Eithan al-Bahrani and Sheikh Abdul Hameed al-Sa'idi.

10- Madrasat Mirza Karim al-Shirazi

This school lies in *al-Abbasia al-Sharqia* quarter and was built in 1287 A. H. (1870 A. D.). A large prayer hall was built inside the school which was renewed once again in 1308 A. H. (1891 A. D.) by Sayyid Mohammed al-Mousawi al-Shirazi, according to the plaque placed inside the building. The school building is vast, consists of one floor and has a large open courtyard. Among its teachers were the 'religious orator' the martyard Sheikh Abdul Zahra al-Ka'bi and Sheikh Mohammed Ali al-Khlaiq.

11- Al-Madrasa al-Hindiya al-Sughra

This school is situated in one of the alleyways which leads from *souk al-Tujjar* to *Imam Ali* street. It was built in 1300 A. H. (1883 A. D.) by a pious Indian lady known as '*Taj Mahal*' who entailed the school in the name of *allama* Sayyid Ali Naqi al-Tabataba'i according to the endowment will. The school has 7 rooms that are used to accomodate Afghani and Indian students. Among its teachers were Sayyid Mohammed Hussain al-Kishmiri, Sayyid Murtadha al-Tabataba'i and Sayyid Murtadha al-Wajidi[1].

12- Madrasat Ibn Fahad al-Hilli

This school is situated in *Bab al-Qibla* street (or *Abul Fahad* street) and embraces the tomb of the scholar Sheikh Ahmed bin Fahad al-Hilli al-Asadi. It was built on a large area of land, consisted of a prayers hall and a large open courtyard around the tomb. Forty rooms, divided between two floors, surround the yard. The rooms are used to accomodate students of Islamic studies. It also has a public library known as '*Maktabat al-Rasoul al-A'Dham*'. The school was renewed twice, the last such work was carried out on instructions from the Grand *marji'* Sayyid Muhsin al-Tabataba'i al-Hakim.

13- Madrasat al-Burujerdi

This school is situated in *al-Mukhaiyam* street and was built following instructions by the 'grand *marji*" Sayyid Hussain al-Burujerdi who died in 1380 A. H. (1960 A. D.). The building work was not completed during his lifetime but was finished

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[1] AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, p. 284.

in 1381 A. H. (1961 A. D.) by *al-marji'* Abdul Hadi al-Shirazi. The school building is a splendour in Islamic architecture. It consists of two floors containing 20 rooms that are used to accomodate students of Islamic studies.

14- Madrasat Sharif al-Ulama

This school is situated in Kida Ali Alleyway which branches off *Bab al-Qibla* street. Next to the school is the tomb of *allama* Sheikh Sharif al-Ulama who died in 1245 A. H. (1830 A. D.). The school was built on instructions from the 'Grand *marji"* Sayyid Muhsin al-Tabataba'i al-Hakim and formed an endowment for the benefit of students of Islamic studies in Karbala and Najaf. It consists of two floors and contains 22 rooms.

15- Madrasat al-Imam al-Baqir

This school is situated in *Bab al-Kham* Quarter and near *al-Fas'ha* Square. It was built by Sayyid Imad al-Deen Mohammed Tahir al-Bahrani in 1381 A. H. (1961 A. D.) and includes lecture rooms and other rooms to accomodate students of Islamic studies. A public library was also incorporated. The school was previously a '*Hussainiya*' for the pilgrims during religious occassion coming from the city of Kadhimiya near Baghdad.

16- Al-Madrasa al-Hussainiya

This school was situated 30 metres north of *al-rawdha al-Abbasiya*. It was built on a 400 square metres land and included 28 rooms as a residence quarter for the students of Islamic studies. The main subjects taught were *fiqh* (prudence juris),

uṣūl Islamic (Fundamentals), Arabic grammer, Logic, Tafseer of Qur'an. The school was built following efforts by the 'Religious Orator' Sheikh Hassan al-Na'eeni from donation made by Kuwaiti citizens. It was demolished in recent years.

17- Madrasat al-Khaṭeeb

This school is situated in *al-Mukhaiyam* Quarter and was built in 1357 A. H. (1937 A. D.) by *allama* Sheikh Mohammed al-Khaṭeeb. Here, Students are taught Islamic studies that included the fundamentals of the Arabic language. However, the school is semi afficial and the study period is five years[1].

[1] AL-SHAHROUDI, N. D., Tarikh al-Haraka al-Ilmia fi Karbala, pp. 284- 287.
- TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, pp. 206- 210.

Chapter V: Historical and Traditional Buildings

5.1 Introduction

The historical and traditional Islamic buildings are characterised with a variety of architectural features. Examples of these building are, traditional markets (*souks*), shopping arcades (*kaiseriyat*), *khans*, public baths (*hammams*) and traditional houses. These buildings were in the past common place in Karbala as they were compatible with the customs and social structure of the people and also brought them closer to their religious and social traditions.

The style of these buildings were to a great extent influenced by the Mesopotamian culture and also by the Islamic style of architecture which is a combination between external influence and local traditions. This is consistent with the trend in a developed culture and also takes into account local weather conditions and the environment.

One of the features of the traditional buildings in Karbala is the use of local buildings materials such as the clay brick (*a'jur*), gypsum and *qashani* tiles. Thus, many examples of application of artistic work and masterpieces of architecture can be seen on the traditional buildings in Karbala which are the product of expertise in architecture contributed by skilful architects in different Islamic periods in Iraq. Both economic considerations and aesthetic aspects can be observed in these

buildings which incorporates beautiful Islamic decorations with mosaic, clay bricks (*a'jur*), *qashani* tiles, various decorations with wood such as the *shanasheel* and other decorating works. Some of these buildings are still standing today in its original shape while only part of the original shape is still preserved in others because maintenance and renewal work was carried out on them. There is another group of buildings which completely lost their traditional origin due to the frequent renewal and maintenance work whereas a fourth group were completely removed.

This chapter will concentrate on the architecture of historical and traditional buildings which is divided into:

- Traditional Markets (*Souks*) and Shopping Arcades (*Kaiseriyat*).
- Khans.
- Public Baths (*Hammams*).
- Traditional Houses.
- Ukhaidhir Fortress.

5.2 Traditional Markets (*Souks*) and Shopping Arcades (*Kaiseriyat*)

5.2.1 Traditional Markets (*Souks*)

The historical sources mention that the origin of the traditional markets (*souks*) in the city of Karbala goes back to the start of the third Hijri century and more precisely during the rule of the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'moun. These same sources also point out that the Karbala traditional markets were flourishing with activity. Various caravans used to trade in these markets, some would decide to live close to the Imam Hussain's tomb while others would return to their countries. This continued until the time when, in 236 A. H. (850 A. D.), the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakil ordered the demolition of the building over Imam Hussain's grave and all other buildings around it[1].

During the Buwaihid rule, the number of markets increased between the two holy shrines. This occured between 369 to 371 A. H. (980- 982 A. D.) following the renewal of the shrine building of Imam Hussain by Adhud al-Dawla. In 372 A. H. (983 A. D.), he also built for the first time the shrine of al-Abbas and erected new houses and traditional markets (*souks*) in the city[2].

The city of Karbala was well known for its traditional markets that together

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[1] AL-SADR, S. H., Nazhat Ahlul Haramain fi Imaret al-Mashhadain, pp. 29- 31.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, M., H.,M., Madinat al-Hussain, Vol. 2, p. 106.

represents one of the social establishments of the city. It is inherently linked to the holy shrines and is spread around it. Some markets extend up to the entrances of the shrines in such a way that one cannot but pass through them. Thus, strengthen the spiritual and material relationship with the life of the inhabitants and pilgrims of the city. Certain markets were in the route of the Hussaini processions held during the religious occasions and the path taken by the funeral processions[1].

Beside the main traditional markets, there are other traditional markets that are considered auxiliary commercial centres connected to the main traditional markets (*souks*) on one side and to the residential areas on the other. Many travellers and orientalists mentioned the markets in the city of Karbala. The Portuguese traveller Pedro Teixira described the markets when he visited the city in 1013 A. H. (1604 A. D.) by saying, "The markets are all well vaulted, and all things needful are abundant, as is merchandise: for that, many merchants of various countries meet there"[2].

Another description of the traditional markets is given in the book "Iraq and the Persian Gulf as follows: the great line of shops, formerly a covered suq (*souk*), which form the principal bazaar traversing the town from north to south"[3].

The traditional markets became specialised in Karbala, where each market or part

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[1] RAOUF, DR. I., A., S., Hadharat al-Iraq, Vol. 10, Arabic Text, pp. 184, 185.
- AL-MAQDISI, S. A., Ahssen al-Taqassim fi Dikril Aqalim, Arabic Text, p. 117, 1906.

[2] SINCLAIR, W., F., The travels of Pedro Teixira, p. 51.

[3] IRAQ AND THE PERSIAN GULF, Naval Intelligence Division, p. 537.

of it specialises in particular merchandise. This specialisation is considered a beautiful feature of the Islamic markets and those in Karbala can be regarded as Islamic museum of local goods and handicrafts that can rarely be seen in the markets of other cities[1].

The markets are considered as one of the important features and essential needs of the city. Its distinct elements, development and complete architecture, are one of the gifts that participated in the progress of the city[2].

The markets played a big role in the economic, social, and sometimes political life of the city. Thus, the market is not only an artery for economic life but also of social life. Beside the mosque, it is considered the only place where the different sections of the urban society meet each other. These markets have a role in linking the city with neighbouring areas through the exchange of merchandise and services with the inhabitants of villages surrounding Karbala[3].

The traditional markets in the Iraqi cities were built as part of the urban planning and, thus, produced proper solutions to the building and housing problems encountered then. It does not differ in its style from the markets in other Arab and Islamic cities. The weather prevailing in these cities dictated a particular design

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[1] AL-MOUSAWI, M., A., al-Awamil al-Tarikhiya li Nasha'at wa Tatawour al-Mudun al-Arabia al-Islamia, Arabic Text, p. 339.
- AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12430, p. 21, London, 1997.

[2] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12430, p. 21, London, 1997.

[3] RIAZ, H., 'Islamic and Urbanization in the Middle East' In Existics, No. 195, p. 190, February 1972.
- AL-AFGHANI, S., Aswaq al-Arab fil Jahilia wal Islam, Arabic Text, p. 139, Damascus, 1960.

of market making it narrow and almost straight. The shops are mostly found on both sides of the market and its passages are provided with a ceiling to protect it from rain, the strong sunlight and high winds[1].

During the building of the traditional markets and its auxiliaries such as the shopping arcades (*kaiseriyat*), it was observed that basic requirements such as lighting were provided with the minimum addition of heat and ensuring good ventilation inside the market. Other points considered were the smooth movement of people and the means of transport in use before[2].

The traditional markets in the city of Karbala were characterised with simplicity in its architectural styling especially in the arches, the well-vaulted ceiling built of clay brick (*a'jur*), the exterior facade and the stress on enriching the interior with architectural elements[3].

Negligence and lack of maintenance and repairs resulted in the loss of many structural components that were well known in the traditional markets especially the vaulted ceiling built of clay brick. These ceilings were replaced with wooden beams and covered with metallic sheets. Since the early seventies, construction of new roads and the recent destruction of the city centre resulted in the disappearance of many old markets such as *al-Tujjar*, *al-Hussain*, *al-Abbas*, *Bab*

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[1] ASALET AL-MUDUN AL-ARABIA, A'faq Arabia, Third Year, 1st Issue, Arabic Text, p. 35, September 1977. - AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12430, p. 21, London, 1997.

[2] AL-JANABI, DR. H. K., al-Madina al-Islamia wa Khasa'isiha, Majjalat al-Tarbia wal Ta'lim (University of Mosul), Issue No. 2, Arabic Text, p. 330, 1980.

[3] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12430, p. 21, London, 1997

al-Qibla and others. Few of the old main markets escaped destruction. But, because of maintenance work carried out that lacked planning, the market has lost its original heritage especially the unique type of ceiling such as in the *souks* of *al-Arab*, *al-Maidan*, *al-Mukhaiyam* and *Bab al-Salalma*.

The main traditional markets (*souks*), past and present are as described below:

- Souk al-Tujjar

It was one of the main three markets (*souks*) in the city of Karbala built by Adhud al-Dawla al-Buwaihi in 369 A. H. (980 A. D.). These three markets were extended from the gate of the small open courtyard (*sahan al-Sagheer*). This courtyard was also built by Adhud al-Dawla and annexed by the outside walls of the holy shrine of Imam Hussain in the same year. These markets were built from bricks (*a'jur*) and gypsum. Their roofs were also vaulted by *a'jur* and gypsum.

Souk al-Tujjar was positioned between the two holy shrines and it specialised in the trade of various types of clothing fabrics. The market was demolished in recent years.

- Souk al-Abbas

This market was regarded one of the main shopping centre in the city in which gold and silver were sold.

It was one of the three markets built by Adhud al-Dawla al-Bawaihi in 369 A. H.

(980 A. D.) and located on the span of *souk al-Tujjar* to the east, but separated by *Imam Ali* street. The market was also demolished in recent years.

- Souk al-Hussain

This market extended from *Bab al-Karama*, the gate of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya*, and ended at *Sahib al-Zaman* street intersecting *souk al-Tujjar* in between. It is the third market (*souks*) built by Adhud al-Dawla al-Bawaihi in 369 A. H. (980 A. D.). In the beginning of the market were shops selling articles of luxury whereas in the middle and the end were shopping arcades (*kaiseriyat*) and shops selling various goods. The market was also demolished in recent years.

- Souk al-Arab

It was built during the Ottoman period in 1052 A. H. (1642 A. D.) when Ahmed Agha governed Karbala. He built the municipality building in the old square (*Midan*) and surrounded it by a network of markets. This market was an extention of those markets detached by *Imam Ali* street.

This market ended at *Qadhi al-Hajaat*, one of the gates of Imam Hussain shrine, and was called *souk al-Arab* as it was used by bedouins to buy goods and clothes. A part of this market is still existing.

- Souk al-Naalchiya

This market is paralleled to *souk al-Arab* and ends at *Imam Ali* street. In this traditional market (*souk*) there are small shoemaking shops. This market was built

in the late Ottoman period.

- Souk al-Maidan

This market extends from *Imam Ali* street on the opposite side of *al-Arab* and *al-Naalchiya souks* and ends at the old square (*maidan*). This traditional market (*souk*) is considered one of the old markets in the city and is well known for mainly selling meat, fruits and vegetables. This market was built by the Ottoman Ahmed Agha in 1052 A. H. (1642 A. D.).

- Souk al-Alaawi

This traditional market is well known for trading in rice, other grains, and flour. It is located between *souk al-Maidan* and *al-Abbas* street and was also built by the Ottoman Ahmed Agha in 1052 A. H. (1642 A. D.).

There are other important markets in the city, some are still standing in their original locations whereas others have been moved to other locations because of the demolition of the old site. Examples of such traditional markets are called: *souk al-Sarajjin*, *souk al-Khayyaṯin*, *souk al-Ḥiyyak*, *souk Bab al-Salalma*, *souk al-Mukhaiyam*, *souk Bab al-Khan* and *souk al-Ṣaffarin*[1].

[1] ṬUMA, S. ,H. , Karbala fil Dhakira, pp. 312- 321.
-AL-KIRBASI, M. S., Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Ḥussainiya, Bab Madinat al-Ḥussain, al-Janeb al-Eqtiṣadi, In Print, 1997.

5.2.2 Shopping Arcades (*Kaiseriyat*)

The origin of the word *kaiseriyat* (plural of *kaiseriya* in Arabic) goes back to the culture of the Romans who ruled North Africa. They used to have a big market in every major town called *kaisariya* and this derives its name from the word Kaiser (Caesar in English). *Kaiseriya* is a building with many shops inside it. It is usually located in the city centres that was previously used by the Romans to sell the goods levied from the merchants as taxes[1]. The city of Karbala has many shopping arcades (*kaiseriyat*) scattered around in the main shopping areas of the city centre. These are traditional buildings that are similar in their architectural plans to the *khans* but differ in their functions.

Some historical sources mention that the Russian kings and tzars built commercial areas as complexes both in their country and in countries lying beyond the river (probably referring to neighbouring countries) and were called *kaiseriyat*. Because of the strong relationship between Iraq and these countries, similar complexes were built in Iraq[2].

Kaiseriyat are important buildings in the Iraqi cities and one of its essential units. It is one important aspect that played a role in the economic development of the city since it provides other shops with some of their needs of both local and

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[1] HASSAN, DR. H., I., Tarikh al-Islam, Arabic Text, p. 413, Dar Ihia' al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, Lebanon.
- AL-MOUSAWI, M., A., al-Awamil al-Tarikhiya linash'at wa Tatawour al-Mudun al-Arabia al-Islamia, p. 266, Dar al-Rashid lil Nashr, 1982.

[2] AL-KIRBASI, M., S., Da'iret al-Ma'arif al-Hussainiya - section on Madinat Karbala, in print, 1997.

imported commodities[1].

The shopping arcades (*kaiseriyat*) in the city of Karbala and other Iraqi cities are either square or rectangular shaped buildings and they usually occupy the areas behind the shops in the main traditional markets (*souks*). It consists of two floors, the ground floor has a large yard in its centre surmounted with a ceiling that also covers the first floor and surrounded with shops facing the yard, each specialises in a certain type or selection of commodities. Sometimes, the frontal of the shops are surmounted with pointed or circular arches, built of local clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum. The first floor incorporates rooms used as commercial offices, stores and workshops for the traditional and local industries such as shoemaking, tailoring and book binding. There is also a gallery in front of the rooms overlooking the yard in the ground floor. However, some shopping arcades consist of a ground floor only and is owned by one person and therefore, its shops contain various goods. The entrance to the shopping arcade leads to the traditional markets (*souks*) and starts with robust wooden doors closed at night. Local building materials were used in the building of shopping arcades, such as clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum. The ceilings are vaulted and built with bricks. Ventilation and lighting get through side openings around the ceiling and via its main entrance[2].

Most of the shopping arcades (*kaiseriyat*) were removed partly because of the negligence in its maintenance and renewal and partly due to demolition of the city

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12430, p. 21, London, 1997.

[2] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12430, p. 21, London, 1997.

centre in recent years. The most important shopping arcades (*kaiseriyat*) that were known in the city of Karbala are: *al-Akhbaria*, *Abu Ma'ash*, *Ridha al-Sahaf*, *al-Haj Ali al-Wakil*, *al-Haj Kadhim*, *al-Haj Mahdi al-Attar*, *Hassan Nasrallah*, *al-Haj Hassoun Tabour Ghasy*, *Sheikh al-Sharia*, *Hassan Sh'aib*[1].

[1] TUMA, S. H., Karbala fi al-Dakira, p. 172.

5.3 Khans

Khans are buildings that are used as guest houses by travellers, merchants and pilgrims. Their numbers increased during the initial Islamic period due to the expansion of commercial activities inside and outside the boundaries of the Islamic empire. In addition to the spread of the guest houses (*khans*) on trading caravan routes, some were also built inside the cities but were normally smaller in size compared to those on the caravan routes[1].

Khan is a term introduced into Arabic from the Persian word '*Caravansera*' which means 'caravan stopping point' or 'caravan's rest house'[2].

It also denotes a 'shop'. The word *khan* has been in use by all local oriental languages. Its origin is derived from the Aramaic language and designates a 'shop' or any place dealing with trade. A *khan* may also refer to a 'store'. Later, this term was applied to hotels inside towns and those situated along the old routes linking different towns[3].

During the seventh Hijri century, the number of these guest houses (*khans*) increased in towns and out of towns on travellers and trading caravan routes in

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[1] AL-JANABI, T.J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, pp. 350- 351.

[2] IBN MANDHOUR, Lisan al-Arab, Vol. 13, Arabic Text, p. 146, Darul Fikr. Beirut.
- DAHKHUDA, A. A., Lughat Nameh, under the heading 'Karwan', Persian Text, p. 148, Danishgah Tehran Press, Tehran, 1959.

[3] AL-QUSAIRI, DR. I ,Y., Sumer, Vol. 38, Parts 1 & 2, Arabic Text, p. 247, al-Muassesa al-A'mma lil Athar wal Turath, Ministry of Culture and Guidance, 1982, Iraq.

Iraq. An example of such a *khan* is that located on the road linking the cities of Mosul and Sinjar in Northern Iraq. Another such *khan* is that built before 681 A. H. (1283 A. D.) by the *wali* (governor) Ala' uddin. It is situated in Baghdad on the bank of the Tigres River and at *Bab al-Ghurba* (known as *Shari'at khan al-Tamr*). This *khan* is known today as *khan al-Daftardar*[1].

During the eighth Hijri century, when Aminul din Marjan was the appointed *wali* of Baghdad by the Jala'iri Sultan Owais bin Sheikh Hassan, Marjan built *khan Marjan* in Baghdad that is still standing to this day[2].

With regard to the *caravan khans*, historical sources mention that it became widespread during the Safavid and Ottoman empires either in the Tenth and Eleventh Hijri centuries (16- 17 th centuries A. D.) or possibly in later periods[3].

As for the city of Karbala, *khans* became widespread inside the town, on its outskirts and on the routes of trading caravans and pilgrims. The latter one are considered the most important *khans* in Iraq.

There are, therefore, three types of *khans*:

1. Those lying in towns, within the markets area or close to it, known as *khanat*

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[1] JAWAD, DR. M. & SOUSA, A., Dalil Kharittet Baghdad al-Muffassal, Arabic Text, p. 206, Matba'at al-Majma' al-Ilmi al-Iraqi, 1929.

[2] AL-QUSAIRI, DR. I. Y., Sumer, Vol. 38, Parts 1 & 2, p. 247.

[3] AL-JANABI, DR. T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, p.353.

al-Mudun.

2. Those lying on the outskirts of towns, known as *khanat al-Arbadh*.

3. Those lying on the routes of trading caravans and pilgrims, known as *khanat al-Qawafil*[1].

Khans inside Towns

Most of these were concentrated close to the market area inside the towns. This concentration gives the people the opportunity to closely assess the trade in the city. The functions of these *khans* range from those used for local and foreign trade to guest houses for the visiting, travelling and incoming merchants, and may also be used as stores for their goods. The central open courtyard of the *khan* is usually used to display the goods for people to look at and purchase the merchandise[2].

The *khans* in the city of Karbala are regarded as historical buildings and of unique architectural style. In general, it consists of two floors with a large open courtyard usually situated in the middle. The ground floor contains many rooms that surround the yard, and separated from the yard by either a hallway or a gallery (*rawaq*) in most cases. The frontage of the *rawaq* is surmounted by pointed or circular arches, built of *a'jur* and gypsum. These rooms are normally used as stores and warehouses for the merchant's goods. The open courtyard is

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[1] AL-HAMDANI, DR. T. N. & Dr. Al-Shaikhli. S. I., Al-Madina wal Hayat al-Madaniya, Vol. 2, Arabic Text, p. 342, Dar al-Hurriya lil Tiba'a, Baghdad, 1988.

[2] AL-JANABI, DR. T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, p. 350.
- AL-HAMDANI, DR. T. N. & Dr. Al-Shaikhli, S. I., Al-Madina wal Hayat al-Madaniya, Vol. 2, p. 342.

used as a resting place for the merchants and travellers and also for tethering animals (see plate no. 22).

The first floor includes rooms that are used to accommodate residents from the city, merchants and travellers. The rooms opens onto a passageway (a gallery) overlooking the open yard which mostly surrounds it from four sides. This gallery is covered and sometimes surmounted by pointed or circular arches similar to those on the ground floor. It is usually built of lighter materials than those on the ground floor to overcome problems of heavy load on the building. Sometimes, the yard is temporarily covered to provide greater space for storing new goods and in this case natural light gets through the side opening below the temporary ceiling. The *khan's* gates are large and tall and usually closed at night[1].

The *khans* inside Karbala differ in area and building style. Examples of these *khans* are: *khan al-Pasha*, *khan al-Dihin*, *khan ibn Hadal*, *khan al-Asfoor*, *khan Hamid al-Dahan*, *khan al-Sayyid Abdul Ameer al-Shami*, *khan al-Haj Ibrahim al-Baroudi*, *khan al-Haj Saleh al-Anbari* (Now known as *Nasir al-Dorogi*), *khan Mohammed al-Sheikh Ali*, *khan al-Haj Abbas al-Wakil*, *khan al-Naqeeb*, *khan Mohammed Rashid al-Safi al-Chalabi*, *khan Ahmed al-Gamber*, *khan al-Haj Ahmed Weshah*, *khan Abdul Razzeq al-Gilgawi*, *khan al-Nawab*, *khan al-Haj Abdul Ameer Abu Dagga*, *khan Sayyid Mahdi al-Hindi*, *khan Mahdi al-Saleh Uwaid* and *khan al-Dabbaghia*[2].

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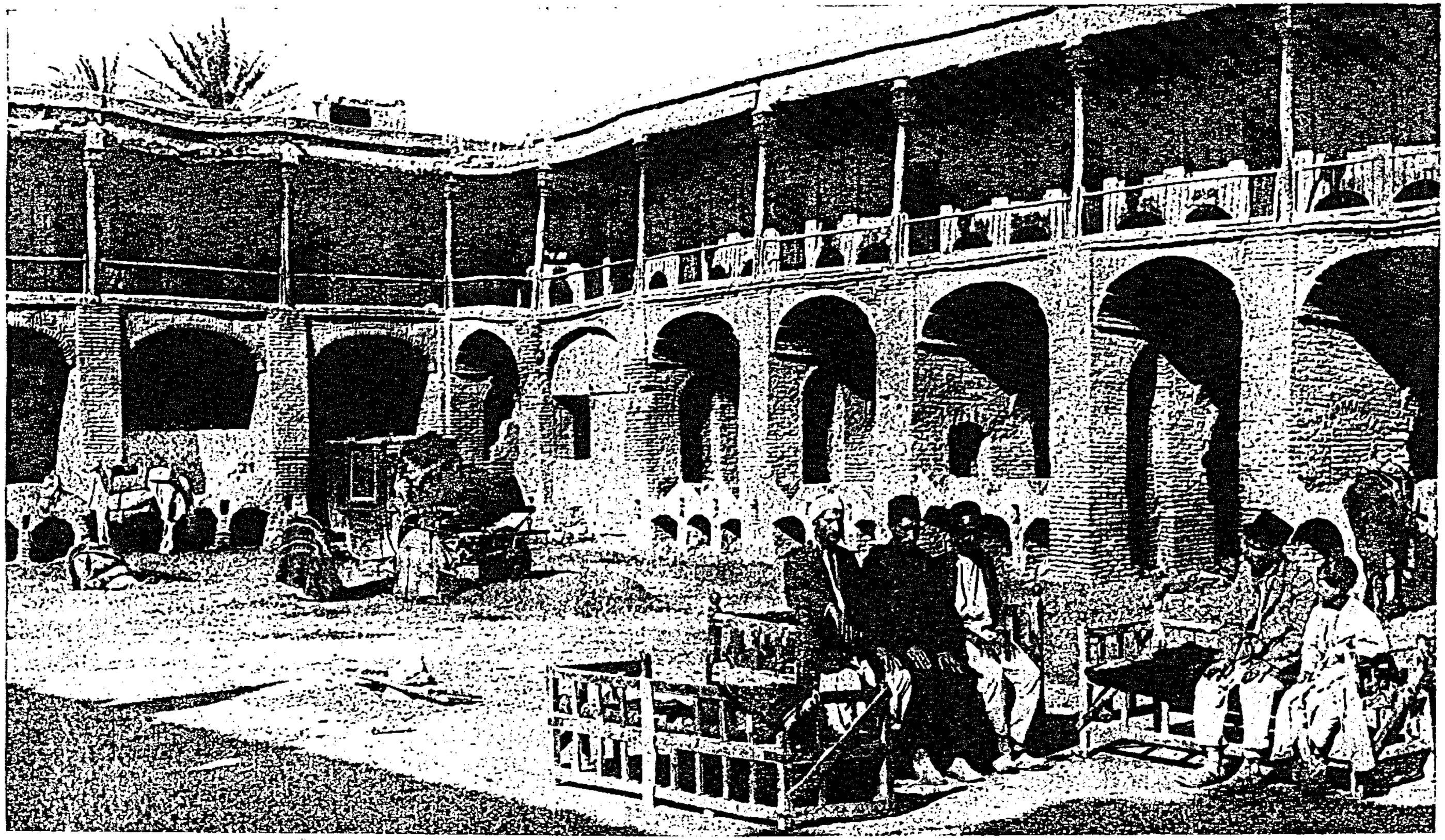
[1] AL-HAMDANI, DR. T. N. & Dr. Al-Shaikhli, S. , Al-Madina wal Hayat al-Madaniya, Vol. 2, p. 344.

[2] TUMA, S. H., Karbala fil Dakira, pp. 171, 172.



TIPICAL KHAN IN KARBALA IN 1920

(FROM "PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONS-" EDITED BY J. A. HAMMERTON.)

Most of the *khans* inside Karbala were ruined in different periods, especially in recent years, either because of demolition or negligence. Some underwent changes in their architectural design and thus its original architectural style has been deformed (see plate no. 23).

Khans on the Outskirts of the City

These *khans* differ from those inside the city and also from those on the caravan routes in their level of services, size, location and the means of transport used[1].

They are similar in plan and architecture with those in towns and on caravan routes. Thus, open courtyard (*sahan*) exists in the middle surrounded by overlooking rooms on the ground floor. The walls and the relatively large gates are both known to be high. Various architectural elements are also incorporated in these building such as arches, vaults and domes by using the local building materials clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum.

Khans on Caravan Routes

These types of *khans*, known as *'khanat al-Qawefil'*, increased in importance during the Safavid and Ottoman rules, both in Karbala in particular and in Iraq, due to the absence of security on highways and to the flow of trade and pilgrims through the Iraqi cities. Therefore, these *khans* were safe refuge for the caravans and travellers. They were especially concentrated on the Baghdad- Karbala- Najaf

[1] AL-HAMDANI, DR. T. N. & Dr. Al-Shaikhli S. I., Al-Madina wal Hayat al-Madaniya, Vol. 2, p. 343.

TWO TYPICAL OLD KHANS INSIDE THE CITY - 1995.

routes[1].

The *caravan khans* are considered one of the distinctive buildings of Islamic architecture in the city of Karbala. The religious status of Karbala and its strategic location on the routes of traders and pilgrims (those performing Haj in Mecca) in relation to other Iraqi cities, Iran, Turkey and central Asia have led to the increase in these types of *khans* on the main external roads connecting this city.

The *khans* are similar to each other in their plans and architecture and built of clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum. It is either rectangular or square shaped and incorporates a large open courtyard overlooked by a chain of rooms that are preceded by *iwans* or galleries. The *iwans* are surmounted by either pointed or circuler arches. Somtimes, there is a water well in the centre of the yard that is surrounded by a ground elevated by one or two steps that is allocated for performing prayers. The rooms in the *khan* are used by the incoming merchants, travellers, pilgrims and visitors for a short rest or overnight accomodation.

The *sahan* (open courtyard) is usually used to display and sell goods and may also be used for tethering animals such as horses. The *khan* are known for its vast building and high walls, supported by towers in four corners. The upper sections of the towers are crenellated to defend the *khan* from attacks and burglars. Various local decorating styles are incorporated in the building such as arches,

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[1] AL-HAMDANI, DR. T. N. & Al-Shaikhli, Dr. S. I., Al-Madina wal Hayat al-Madaniya, Vol. 2, pp. 343- 344.
- AL-JANABI, DR.T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, p. 353.

vaults and domes all built with local building materials like *a'jur* and gypsum[1].

Most *caravan khans* in Karbala ended in ruins due to natural causes and negligence, and some lost part of their original architectural shape as a result of unplanned maintenance.

The most important *caravan khans* in Karbala are described below:

Khan al-Ittaishi

This is located in the village of *al-Ittaishi* which comes under the administrative control of *Hussainiya* district (*Nahia*). It also lies to the north east of Karbala on the old Baghdad to Karbala road. It was recently used as a police station for this village. However, most of its walls and utilities are now damaged especially the *iwans*[2].

The building plan of '*khan al-Ittaishi*' is very similar to the *khans* built outside towns in the same period. It is rectangular in shape, 65 metres long by 51 metres wide and its exterior walls are 5 metres high and 1 metre in thickness. The upper section of the walls were crenelated to defend the *khan* against possible attacks and burgularies. The four exterior corners are supported by big towers whose radius is 4.5 metres each. This guest house (*khan*) has a gate in the middle of the

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[1] SALMAN, DR. E., Abdul Khaliq, H & Younis, N., al-Imarat al-Arabia al-Islamia fil Iraq, Vol. 1, Arabic Text, p. 3, Dar al-Hurriya lil Tiba'a, Baghdad, 1982.
- AL-JANABI, DR. T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, p. 351.
- AL-HAMDANI, DR. T. N. & Al-Shaikhli, Dr. S., al-Madina wal Hayat al-Madaniya, Vol. 2, p. 344.

[2] AL-QUSAIRI, DR. I. Y., Sumer, Vol. 38, Parts 1 & 2, Arabic Text, p. 250, al-Muassesa al-A'mma lil Athar, Ministry of Guidance and Culture in Iraq, 1982.

western side which comes out from the wall. It is 3 metres high by 2 metres wide surmounted by a relatively large pointed arch. There is an open courtyard in the middle of the *khan*, 50 metres long by 35 metres wide surrounded by rooms. These rooms are preceded by galleries (*iwans*) of different dimensions that are surmounted by pointed arches. The ceilings of the rooms and *iwans* are built of pointed vaults. Local buildings materials were used in this *khan* such as clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum[1].

Khan al-Nukhailah

This is the most important guest house (*khan*) on the Karbala- Najaf road and is 14 kilometres to the south west of the city of Karbala. There are two other *khans* on the same road. These are *khan al-Hamad* (also known as *khan al-Nuss*) and *khan al-Musella* that both come under the administrative control of Najaf province.

Historically, the guest houses, such as *khan al-Nukhailah* and other *khans* on the Karbala- Najaf road, goes back to the ruling period of Iraq by the Safavid and Ottoman dynasties[2].

This is similar in plan and architectural design to other *caravan khans* on the highway roads linking the Iraqi cities. It has an open yard in the middle surrounded by a number of rooms. These rooms are preceded by galleries (*iwans*)

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[1] AL-QUSAIRI, DR. T. Y., Sumer, Vol. 38, parts 1 & 2, pp. 250 - 254.

[2] AL-JANABI, DR. T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, pp. 352 - 353.

that are surmounted by pointed arches. It is known for its high wall and entrance. The entrance is of two floors and a gate in the middle. The ceiling of the rooms and *iwans* are built of pointed domes and vaults. Local building materials such as *a'jur* and gypsum are used in this guest house (see plate no. 24)[1].

Khan al-Atshan

It is situated in the area lying between Karbala and Najaf, 16 kilometres west of *khan al-Nukhailah* and 30 kilometres to the south west of Karbala.

It is an old building that goes back to the beginning of the Abbasid period when *qasr* (palace) *al-Ukhaidhir* was built. The building style of this *khan* and its decorating elements indicate that it was only a guest house for the *wali* (governor) of *al-Ukhaidhir* during his visits to Kufa. The name of the *khan* is likely to have recently been named and used as a guest house for travellers and trading caravan[2].

Some historical sources indicate that this *khan* was one of the establishments of the Safavid. This is supported by the existence of *tell* (hill) *Miz'ir* close to it. This hill is the same place over which the pilgrims and walkers used to stop to look at the dome of *al-rawdha al-Hussainiya* during the Safavid period. The ruins of this *khan* is still standing today[3].

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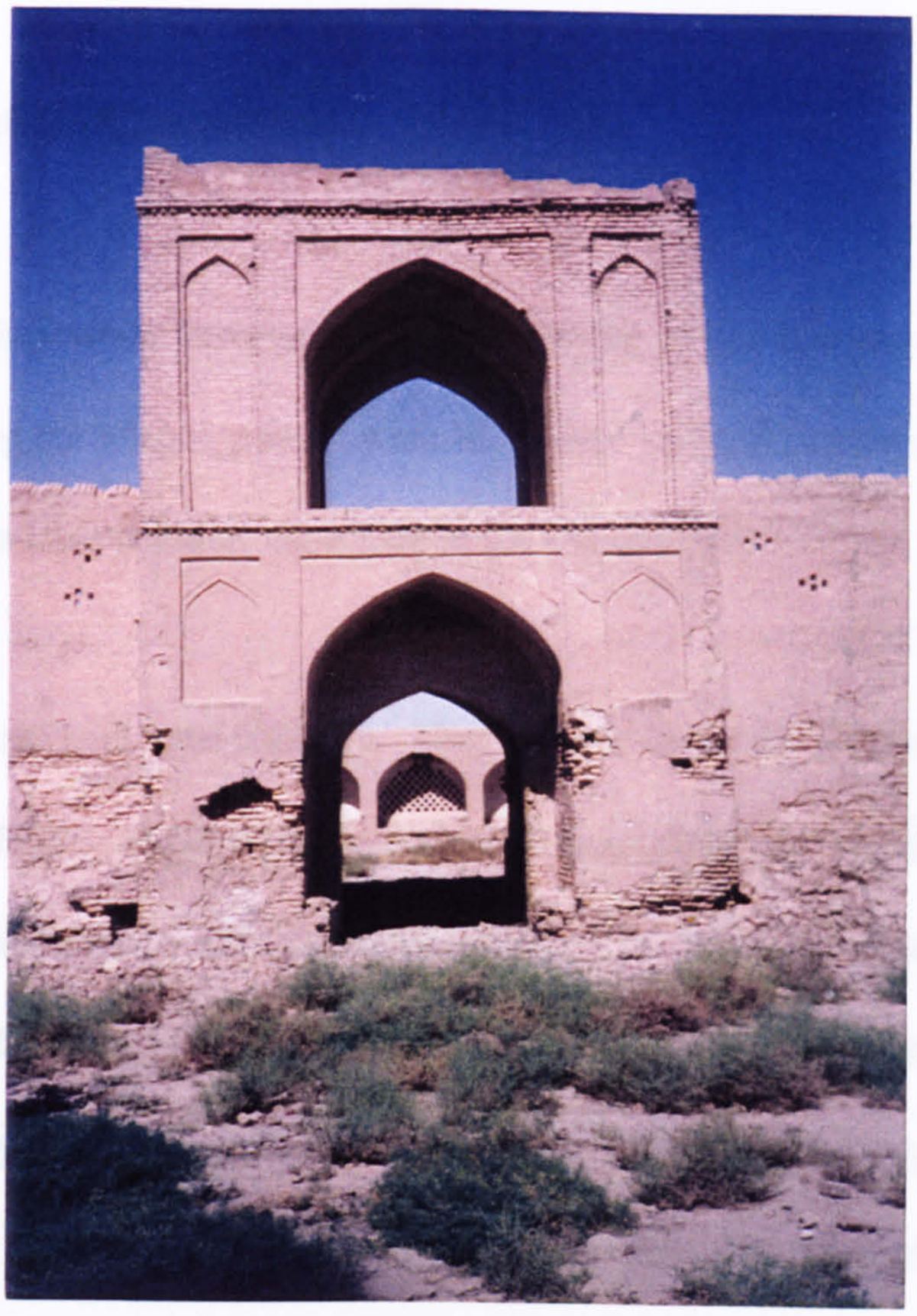
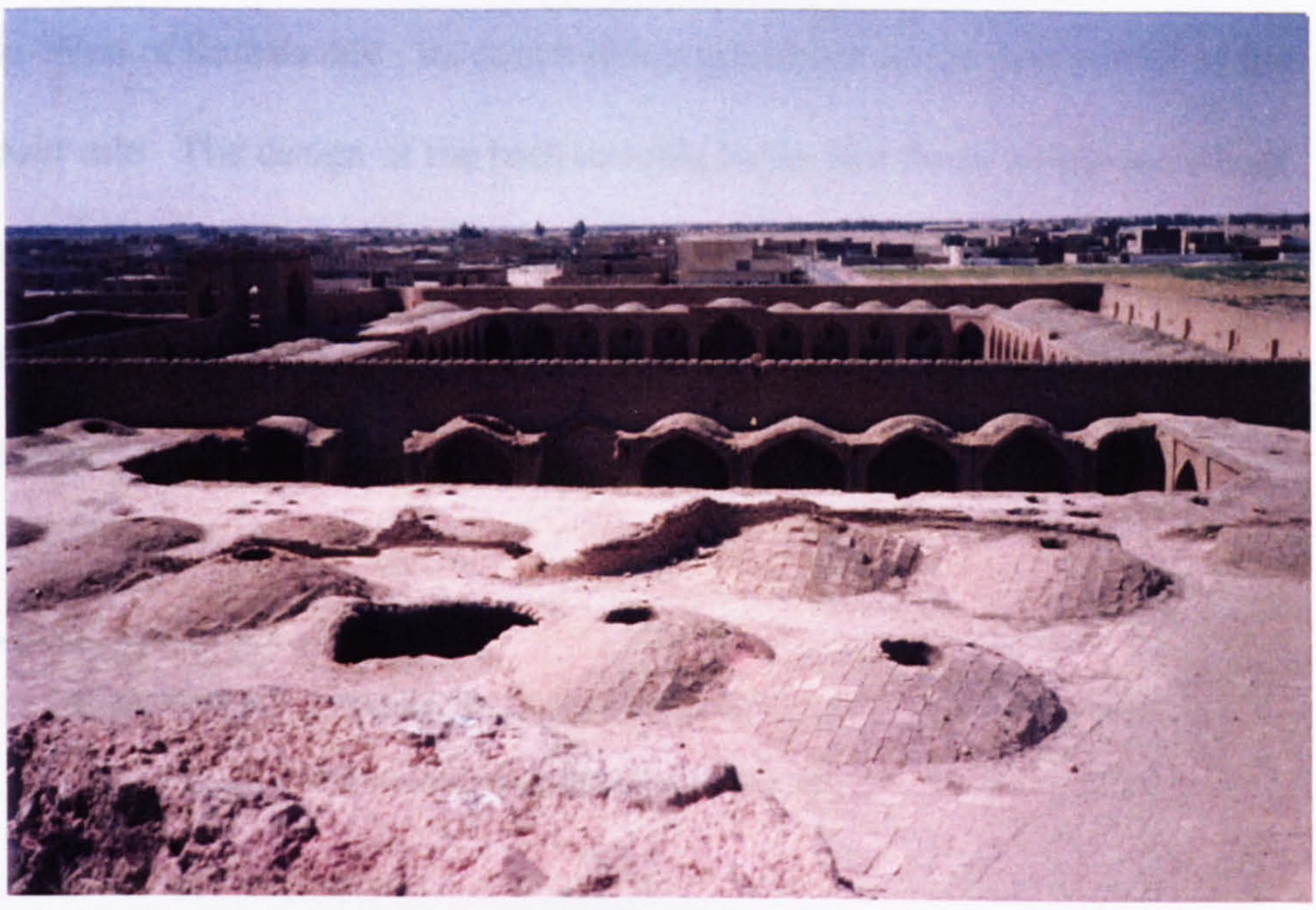
[1] AL-JANABI, DR. T. J., Hadharet al-Iraq, Vol. 10, p. 353.

[2] SALMAN, DR. E., Abdul Khaliq, H. & Younis, N., al-Imarat al-Arabia al-Islamia fil Iraq, p. 42, Dar al-Hurriya lil Tiba', Baghdad, 1982.
- AL-QUSAIRI, DR. I. Y., Sumer, Vol. 38, p. 250.

[3] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 126.



KHAN AL-NUKHAILAH
ON THE KARBALA-NAJAF ROUTE - 1995.



PL

5.4 Public Baths (*Hammams*)

Among the buildings which attracted the attention in the city of Karbala and other Iraqi cities, during the Islamic period, were the public baths (*hammams*). Which were scattered in Islamic cities; especially in the old quarters.

The public baths are traditional buildings. They were known to Muslims since the first century of Hijjri. Some of the historical sources state that the first public baths were built immediately after the Islamic expansion. The first Islamic-Arabic public bath was discovered in Kufa, near Karbala, which is the second Islamic city to be built in Iraq, at 17 A. H. (638 A. D.). It is part of *Dar al-Emara* (governors residence) and is situated at the North- Western side of it. The floor of this bath is covered with lime stone joined by tar (bitumen) as a water-proofing, to prevent the humidity on the bath walls[1].

The bath which is located in the famous *Ukhaidhir* fortress, is 50 kilometres to the South- West of Karbala city. Its construction goes back to the first period of the Abbasid rule. The design of the bath roughly looks like those which were built during the Islamic periods. The bath consists of three parts, and each part looks like a hall or a big room connected by corridors. The walls were built from clay brick (*a'jur*) and lime plastered with gypsum[2].

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[1] AL-SAMKARI, Z. S., SUMER, pp. 141, 142, vol. 44, Iraq, 1986.

[2] SALIH, DR. Q. R., Hand Book of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq, p. 217.

Historical sources stress that during the first half of the fourth hijjri century, there were more than ten thousand public baths in Baghdad. The number of baths has decreased to two thousand in the sixth Hijjri century[1].

Ibn Battuta states, during his trip to Baghdad, "that there were plenty of baths in Baghdad. They were very elegant. The inside walls were covered with black tar (asphalt)". He adds "that these baths have various corners. The doors and walls were covered with black asphalt". One may claim that this material was used to prevent the walls from humidity and water. "The upper parts of the walls were covered with gypsum, which gives a bright white colour. In each corner were two taps, one of which is for hot, and the other for cold water"[2].

The public baths (*hammams*) have been developed during the Islamic periods. At that time it was not familiar for people to have baths in their homes, and also there were no special places for bathrooms. Only the rulers, governors and the wealthy people had their own special bathrooms in their homes. As a result, the idea of public baths came into existence, which were a place for all people no matter their class. These baths played a significant role in the people's social life. Muslim's concerns for baths are justified for health and religious reasons. They were necessary for washing and being clean to be prepared for worshipping. Thus, the effect of the architectural development of the baths was noticeable. The women's

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[1] NAJI, DR. A. J., Dirasat fi Tarikh al-Mudon al-Arabia al-Islamia, p. 306.

[2] IBN BATTUTA, Rihlat ibn Battuta, p. 166.

public baths used to be built next to the men's public baths[1].

The public baths in Karbala are regarded as a gathering place for social life. People's important occasions are linked with baths. For example, the groom and his friends, before wedding go to the nearest public bath, which was also used as a beauty place for women. The baths were also used for treatment and curing some diseases[2].

The journalist Ammanoail Fatehallah Ammanoail, during his visit to Karbala in 1329 A. H. (1911 A. D.), claims that "there were plenty of baths in Karbala"[3].

The public baths in Karbala derived their architectural styles from those of Persian and Turkish, but they were recognised by the local description of the building in Karbala. For example they were using the local bricks (*a'jur*), gypsum, black asphalt and lime for the construction. These materials were used for insulation. For construction of the public baths in Karbala, they used domes and arches to build the ceiling. The walls were thick with beautiful decorations, especially on the outer side of the walls and the domes[4].

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[1] AL-BALADERI, A. Ibn Y., Fetooh al-Buldan, Arabic Text, p. 355, Cairo, 1957.

[2] TUMA, S. H., Public Baths in Karbala, Majalet, al-Turath al-Sha'abi al-Baghdadiya, Arabic Text, p. 61, Issue No. 12, 1972.

[3] AMMANOAIL, F. A., Majalet Lughat al-Arab al-Baghdadiya, pp. 157, 159, Issue No. 5 from 1911, Baghdad.

[4] TUMA, S. H., Public Baths in Karbala, Majalet al-Turath al-Sha'abi al-Baghdadiya, Issue No. 12, Arabic Text, p. 61, 1972.

Public Baths Description

The public baths in Karbala consist of three parts, as follows:

The first part, the undressing room; is a wide place, looks like a big hall with no heating, for people to undress. It contains wooden or stone benches for sitting.

The undressing room is locally known as, '*al-Barraney*'. As usual there is a fountain in the centre of this part. The ceiling which is usually domed, consists of small holes fixed with glass, to lighten this part of the building.

The second part; from *al-Barraney*, people go through a corridor which leads them to a large place where the bath is, called locally as the '*al-Jawaney*'. This part is usually a square or circular shape. It contains various corners. In each there is a small, shallow stone pool, with hot and cold water taps.

In most of the public baths, the *al-Jawaney* was usually surmounted by a dome. It also consists of small holes, fixed with glass, to lighten *al-Jawaney*. The floor of this part is covered with flat *a'jur* called '*fershi*'. This is usually covered with asphalt. The floor is sometimes covered with smooth stone, and the walls are covered with asphalt up to 1.5 m, and the upper part is covered with the bright white gypsum.

The third part, a steam room, was also known as the temperature or sauna room. It is a room with a big pool in the centre. The pool is full of hot water.

Sometimes the hot water pool is part of *al-Jawaney* in one of the corners. Some public baths, have more than one sauna[1].

One of the faults, which the public baths, in Karbala had, was the non-existence of proper underground water-drainage systems. The waste water used to be pumped to artificial wells, and this caused the rise of subterranean water level inside the city buildings. Some baths however, used small underground channels, which were made of bricks, to get rid of the used water. Like *hammam al-Maleh*[2].

The public baths (*hammams*) which were heated by primative methods, used space underneath the bath's floor called '*kura*', which acted as a 1.5 metres high underground furness. The fuels compromised of wood and animal dry dung. To heat the water of the public baths, they used a tank storage room called '*tamma*', constructed next to the bath and heated by the same method as *al-kura*[3].

Some of these baths are still existent in Karbala, however, most are demolished because of lack of maintenance. Some of the public baths were removed because of road widening, in the old part of the city of Karbala. A project which has started since 1977.

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Islamic Baths in Iraq, Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12489, p. 21, London 1997.

[2] AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 26, vol. 1.

[3] TUMA, S. H., Karbala fi al-Thakira, p. 380.

Among the famous public baths in Karbala, are:

1. Hammam al-Maleh

Al-Maleh bath is considered one of the old public baths in Karbala. It is located in *Bab-al-Taq* quarter. Today this bath is known as Imam Musa Ibn Ja'afar bath. This bath was built in the tenth Hijjri century. It used a channel for water drainage made of *a'jur* and gypsum. The channel was near, and parallel to the *Hussainiya* river, from the West Bank. It reaches the city centre, and in the Ottoman period, this channel was used to get rid of the waste water from *hammam al-Maleh*[1].

2. Hammam al-Kubbays

This bath has been known by the name of the *Kubaysaat's* tribe, who lived in the Kubay's area, which is a part of *Bab al-Taq* quarter. This bath was built in 989 A. H. (1581 A. D.). It has been registered as a charitable place by al-Khawaja Issa Mohammed al-Afihi. The trustee was Yahya al-Chalabi. The managers of this bath were from al-Wahab, al-Jaloukhan and some others from al-Alawi's family.

3. Hammam Rockun al-Dawla

This public bath was located in the middle of *al-Qibla souk*. It has been built by

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[1] AL-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 26, vol. 1.
- TUMA, S. H., Karbala fil Thakira, p.380.

al-Shahzada Ali Naqi Mirza Rockun al-Dawla, in 1255 A. H. (1839 A. D.). Its manager was al-allama Mohammed Baqer al-Hujja al-Tabatabai. The ceremonial opening of the bath was held by Jalal Basha, the governor of Karbala, in 1328 A. H. (1910 A. D.). This bath together with *Bab al-Qibla souk*, were demolished during the early seventies.

4. Hammam Bab al-Qibla

This public bath was located nearby to the *Bab al-Qibla*, one of *al-rawdha al-Hussainya's* Gates and built by Mohammed Ali Khan Jan al-Kormnshahi in 1307 A. H. (1890 A. D.). This bath was also demolished in 1367 A. H. (1948 A. D.) in order to open *al-Ha'ir al-Hussaini* street.

5. Hammam al-Mashrouta

This public bath is located in *al-Abbasia al-sharqia* quarter. It was built in 1328 A. H. (1910 A. D.). The bath has been known by this name, because of one of the Iranian Legislation Leader who was al-Haj Agha Noor Allah al-Asfahani. This bath was managed by his brother al-Sheikh Ismaiel. The management was later passed to his sons.

6. Hammam al-Shakha

This public bath is located in *al-Abbasia al-Gharbia* quarter, upon a channel from

al-Hnidiya river known as *al-Shakha*. It was built by Hussain Askar in 1309 A. H. (1892 A. D.). It has been in the period of al-Sayyid Hussain al-Sindi, the councillor of Karbala. Then his son Mohammed Ali was responsible for the management of the bath. In 1959 A. D., the bath was demolished partly in order to widen *al-Abbas* Street. The other part was rebuilt and it has been known as *hammam Karbala al-Hadeeth*. Next to it there is a women's public bath.

7. Hammam al-Mukhaiyam

This public bath is considered as one of the biggest among the other public baths in Karbala City. It was known as *hammam Fayrooza*. It is situated in *al-Mukhaiyam* Square. It was built by the builder al-Shirazi who was known as Dhia'a al-Tujjar in 1317 A. H. (1900 A. D.).

8. Hammam al-Yahudi

This public bath is located at the end of *al-Alaawi souk* in an alley which was populated by Jews, in the Ottoman period, in the Nineteenth century. It was built by Yaqoob Shuker Allah who was one of the famous Jewish landlords.

9. Hammam al-Nawab

This public bath was built by one of the famous Indian Nawab. Sayyid Mehdi al-Tabaṭabai al-Sindi bought it later. It was located at *al-Haraj* market (now the

market is known as *al-Shuhada'* Square). Next to this bath there is a public bath for women whose entrance is at *al-Damad* alley.

10. Hammam al-Sa'ada

This public bath is considered as one of the old public baths in Karbala. It is located at *Bab al-Salalma* quarter, in *al-Nasarwa* alley. It was known as *al-Chasheen hammam*. The bath is used from dawn to sunrise by men, then after sunrise to the evening by women.

11. Hammam Sayyid Saeed al-Sheroufi

This public bath is located in *al-Wzoon* street. It was built by Sayyid Saeed Mustafa al-Sheroufi in 1340 A. H. (1922 A. D.). This bath is part of the orchard known as Sharaf al-Din. Next to this bath is a women's public bath.

12. Hammam al-Baghdadi

This public bath is considered as one of the most old public baths in Karbala. It is located in *al-Bloosh* square (now known as *Imam Ali* square). It was built more than a century ago. The owner of this bath was Sayyid Mehdi al-Jawad al-Baghdadi. Next to this bath is also a women's public bath.

Other public baths (*hammams*) in Karbala are:

Bab-Baghdad al-Sagheer, *al-Haj Ali Shah*, *al-Haj Ghulam Ridha al-Wakeel*, *al-Teel Khana*, *al-Alqami*, *Naynawa and al-Firdousi*[1].

Some of these public baths were demolished during the last years.

[1] A'L-KILLIDAR, M. H. M., Madinat al-Hussain, p. 26, vol. 1.
- AL-QIZWENI, S. I. S. A., Al-Biuotaat al-Alawia fi Karbala, pp. 17, 20, vol. 1.
- TUMA, S. H., Public Baths in Karbala, Majalet al-Turath al-Sha'abi al-Baghdadiya, pp. 66, 70, Issue No. 12, 1972.

5.5 Traditional Houses

Since the first settlement in Karbala city, its planning has been characterised with crowded houses around the two holy shrines of Imam Hussain (A. S.) and al-Abbas (A. S.). This is attributed to the spiritual bondage which attracts the people to the shrines. The nearer to the shrines, the more the density of houses. It is to be noted that the majority of the houses are attached to each other and linked to lanes and alleys, which are a zigzag shape and sometimes have closed ends. Such characteristics are apparently attributed to:

1- deep-rooted social links.

2- means to safeguard against burglaries, and attacks.

3- avoiding exposure to very cold and hot weather[1].

The features of the traditional houses in Karbala are inherent with the Islamic traditions which are well described by John Warren as being "divided sharply between public and private, between man and woman"[2].

Architectural Features of Traditional Houses in Karbala

The architectural features of the traditional house in Karbala are as follows:

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 11299, p. 18, London, 1994.
- TUMA, S.H., Karbala fil Thakira, p. 406.

[2] JOHN WARREN, UR Magazine, p. 7, published by the Iraqi Cultural Centre - London, 1983.

The Main Entrance Door

The main entrance door of the traditional house in Karbala normally has a decorative characteristic, with one or a double door, according to the size of the house. The height of the door is usually 1.80- 2.00 metres, and the width is 1.00 metre for the single door and 1.40 metres for the double door. The top of the door usually has an arch made of clay brick (*a'jur*) and gypsum with decoration and calligraphy. The main door includes, in most cases, a metal knocker with various designs. This entrance door leads to an open courtyard through a bent entrance (*majaz*)[1].

The Bent Entrance (*Majaz*)

One of the features of Karbala's traditional houses is the bent entrance, called '*majaz*', which connects the street or alley with the open courtyard. It is an Islamic style invention, and it was used for the first time in *Dar al-Emara* building at Kufa city in the year 17 A. H. (638 A. D.), and also used at houses in Sammarra. This *majaz* was built according to a strict Islamic social tradition, tended to bend the entrance to avoid detaching the open courtyard from the street or alley, and also to freshen air throughout this *majaz*[2].

Open courtyard (*Housh*)

This courtyard, which is locally called as '*housh*', is surrounded by rooms and

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[1] MUSTAFA, F., The Arabic House in Iraq in the Islamic Period, Arabic Text, pp. 107, 108, Dar al-Hurriya lil Tibaa'- Baghdad - 1983.

[2] AL-ALUSI, M., Majalat al-A'milin fil Nafut, Arabic Text, p. 4, Issue No. 36, Baghdad, 1965.
- KRUNIC, JOVAN, Art Architectural Traditions and New Architecture of Iraq, The House of Baghdad its Old and Modern Concept, SUMER, Vol. 18, p. 4, 1962.

other utilities, including corridors and entrances. This traditional feature is originated in the Babylonian earas (2000 B. C.), where the remains of such houses were found in the sumerian city of UR (*tel al-Muqaiyar*) close to the Euphrates river in the Mesopotamian plains in the South of Iraq[1]. This open courtyard is also one of the characteristics of the traditional house in the Islamic countries[2].

Despite the obvious influence of the Persian, Turkish and Indian traditional architecture on Karbala houses, the basic features of these houses did not change throughout the ages, and remained traditional. The design, decoration and building materials of these houses are somewhat like the old houses of middle and South of Iraq[3].

Karbala's houses vary according to the people class. It consists usually from an open courtyard, the front begins with guest's rooms and their utilities, which is called '*al-Barrani*', and the family living room section with their utilities, which surround the open courtyard, called '*al-Dakhlani*'. The shape of the courtyard varies between square and rectangular.

The open courtyard is like a hall, which is invisible, plays a great role in providing sunlight to the surrounding rooms. The wide windows of these rooms, which overlook this open courtyard, providing sunlight and natural ventilation for these

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[1] RASUL, S.A., Traditional Buildings in Baghdad, Arabic Text, p. 24, Ministry of Culture and Information State Organization of Antiquities and Heritage, Iraq, 1987.

[2] Dr. BAHNASI, A., Al-Fen al-Islami, 1st Ed., Arabic Text, p. 116, Dar Itlaas - Damascus, 1986.

[3] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 18, Issue No. 11299, London, 1994.

rooms, during daytime to be used as a general working space (see plate no. 25).

Usually the floor of this open courtyard is covered with flat *a'jur* in square shapes called '*fershi*'. Sometimes this courtyard is planted with trees in the middle of which there is a magnificent fountain called '*shaderwan*'[1].

These small houses are detached from the streets and lanes in such a way that one may find the size of some houses is only fifty square metres, to indicate the skill of the architect or engineer in saving areas at the utmost to provide a house with an open courtyard[2].

Iwan (*Tarma*)

One of the principal basis of Karbala traditional house design is the *tarma* probably the *iwan's* styles do exist from the early civilization in Northern Iraq (Ninevah). It is also carried on to the Islamic period in Iraq. For example, *Dar al-Emara* at Kufa city, *al-Shia'ba* palace near Basra city, *al-Mansour* palace in Baghdad, the houses which are a part of *al-Ukhaidhir* fortress near Karbala, which is dated to the early Abbasid period. This *tarma* is used for sleeping at noon during summer, instead of the basement (*sardab*). Sometimes it may also be used for dining and tea-time[3].

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 18, Issue No. 11299, London, 1994.

[2] Dr. MAKIYA, M., Baghdad, p. 28, Iraqi Engineers Union Press, Baghdad, 1969.

[3] MUSTAFA, F., The Arabic House in Iraq in the Islamic Period, pp. 114, 115, Dar al-Hurriya lil Tibaa'- Baghdad, 1983.

EXTERNAL VIEW OF A TRADITIONAL HOUSE - 1995.

INTERNAL VIEW OF A TRADITIONAL HOUSE - 1995.

The *tarma* is a habitable, covered and semi-enclosed space with its long side completely open to the courtyard. The other long side is formed by a party wall, external wall or the wall of the habitable rooms overlooking the courtyard through the *tarma*. Every house contains such *tarma* either in the ground floor, or first floor or in both floors.

Construction Features

Generally, the traditional Karbala house is characterised with the high ceiling of the first floor rooms provided it does not exceed 4 metres. Other structural features of the first floor are the large number of high windows, in particular the sides overlooking the streets and alleys. The shelves (niches) and recesses included in the wall of the first floor rooms are used as cupboards and are made to lighten the walls of the rooms. Small stores are sometimes contained in these high rooms to be used for storing bedding materials, such as blankets, sheets, pillows, etc. There is also an access gallery (*mamsha*) in front of the first floor rooms over looking the open courtyard. It is fenced, by 1 metre in hight, beautifully decorated, fence made of wood or steel materials called '*mhajar*' or '*darabzin*'[1]. The materials used in the ceiling of the first floor rooms in Karbala houses were light, such as beams of Poplar trees (*qawagh*) or wood of palm trees as the supporting wooden joints with timber boards nailed to them and straw mats to avoid the heavy weight on the building structure.

The height of the ground floor is normally less than the first floor and

[1] Ibid, p. 59.

characterised by its windows, which are above eye level overlooking the streets and alleys.

The stairs of Karbala houses were tended to be built hidden as it was used only by the family.

The Basement (*Sardab*)

Karbala traditional house is also characterised by its basement (*sardab*), which is a Persian word containing two syllables, '*sard*' means cold, and '*ab*' means water. The *sardab* is used as a place for rest and comfort by families at noon during summer. It is attributed by its thick walls and its lower floor, located underneath the floor of the courtyard[1].

During archaeological excavation in *al-Ukhaidhir* fortress they found a few basements, one of them situated under the East side of the big hall, with 24 stairs leading to the basement. The archaeologists also excavated another basement underneath the middle *iwan*, on the East side of the palace, also with stepping stairs situated on the South-East side of the basement[2].

It may be similar to *al-Bait al-Baghdadi* which was used as a refuge from the hot and dry external thermal environment conditions, here in the *sardab* the

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[1] AL-TOBEKHI, M., Al-Mua'jem al-Dahabi, Arabic Text, p. 343, Dar al-Ilm lil Malayeen, Beirut, 1968.

[2] BELL, G., Palace and Mosque at Ukhaidhir, p. 11, (Oxford 1914).
- AL-HUSSAINI, M. B., SUMER, Vol. 22, pp. 81- 85, Baghdad, 1966.

inhabitants spend the summer afternoon siesta[1].

The ventilation of this basement is achieved by outside small windows normally with the level of the courtyard floor and also through the entrance and stairs of this basement. There are also accesses in the wall like chimneys called '*badgeer*', which is a Persian word containing two syllables, '*bad*', means air, and '*geer*', means extractor. It leads to the roof of the house, allowing fresh air down to the floor of the basement (see plate no. 26). This fresh air was cooled by spraying the floor of the basement with water.

It might be worth stating that the ceiling of this basement is usually built with clay bricks (*a'jur*) and gypsum like domes, vaults and arches. Whereas, the floor of the basement is paved with squared flat *a'jur* (*fershi*) to keep cool weather, splashing them with water. In winter, this basement is used as stores for grains and other food materials[2].

Timber Columns

The timber columns called '*dalag*' were used in traditional Karbala houses to support the corridor in the first floor, and sometimes the rooms and *tarma*. They might be to a great extent, similar to Baghdad houses, however one should add that richly-decorated capitals (*teegan*) shortens the section of the beams between

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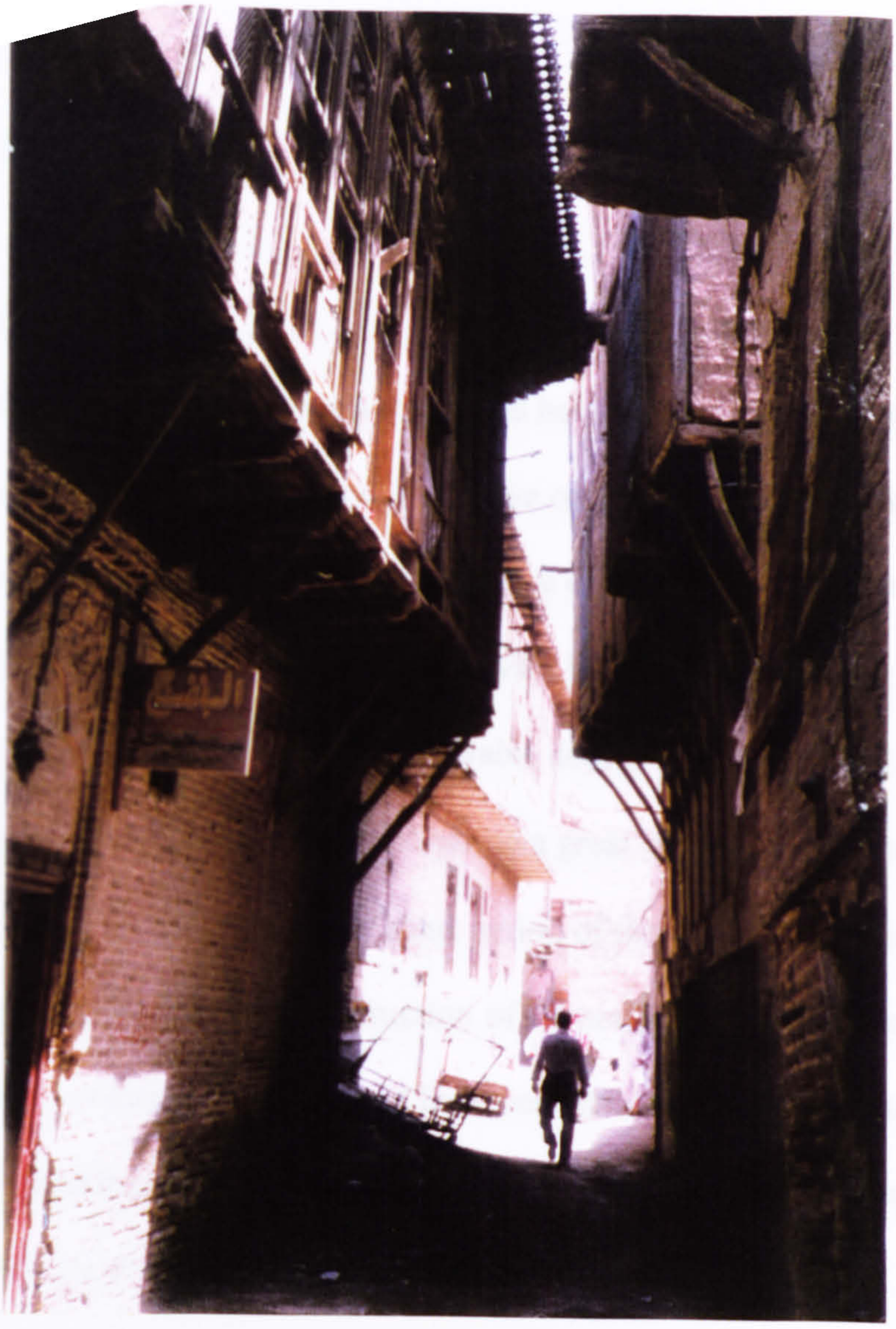
[1] AL-AZZAWI, S., UR Magazine, p. 9, published by the Iraqi Cultural Centre, London, 1985.

[2] MUSTAFA, F., The Arabic House in Iraq in the Islamic Period, Arabic Text, pp. 118, 119.
- AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 18, Issue No. 11299, London, 1994.



AN ALLEY IN THE OLD CITY OF KARBALA - 1995.

PICAL BADGEER (A PASSAGE FOR DRAWING COOL AIR
NSIDE) - 1995

these columns[1].

Local Building Materials

The local building materials of Karbala traditional houses, most of which are clay bricks (*a'jur*), are the main exponents of the house construction. These materials are irreplaceable as they are available and therefore cheaper than other materials. They can also be easily manufactured and with little cost. It is also highly insulated from heat and sound[2]. The considerable density of bricks (*a'jur*) is due to another local material, which is 'gypsum' having a great impact on construction. It dries after the construction in a very short period of time. The descriptions of these materials maintained the construction of domes, arches without using a wooden mould. A mixture of ashes and lime were also used as damp insulation to build the foundations of Karbala houses. Green *a'jur* like stone was used as damp insulation to strengthen these foundations.

Tarmac (asphalt) was also used to build these houses as damp insulation to cover the foundations and the drainage canals. It was also used to cover the roofs of the house before paving it with flat *a'jur* (*fershi*) to avoid water and damp leakages downwards[3].

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 18, Issue No. 11299, London, 1994.

[2] AL-DAWAF, Y., Inshaa' al-Mabani Wa Mawad al-Benaa' - Third Ed., Arabic Text, p. 11, Matbaa't Shafiq - Baghdad - 1969.

[3] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 18, Issue No. 11299, London, 1994.

Plastering and Decorating

Gypsum and *Bureq* (lime) were used instead of paint and plaster for the interior walls and ceiling. Wood was also used in this respect in addition to wood construction. The carpenters were skilful in such works, in particular the windows and doors, overlooking the open courtyard of the house. The windows were decorated with coloured pieces of glass and ornament. Some parts of these windows were being opened to let air and sunlight in the rooms. The decorative bay windows (*shanasheel* or *mashrabiyat*) were regarded as one of the most attractive features of the traditional Karbala house. They were also parts of the room, in the first floor, which extends outward the front side of the house, to overlook the streets and alleys. These parts were built of magnificent decorated wood instead of clay bricks (*a'jur*) or steel avoiding the heavy weight of this extension, and keeping the cool air inside the rooms. They also provide shade for pedestrians to keep them from rain in winter and sunlight in summer.

Ursi was one of the most familiar features of the traditional Karbala house which is an ornamented window opened and shut by holding it upward and downward. Sometimes this *ursi* contains a small window in the middle covered with a latticed wood frame to let air get through and to avoid sunlight. They are opened outward like ordinary windows.

The other features of the traditional Karbala house was the steel poles, which are called '*Panjarrat*', set up vertically and fixed downward and upward the window in such a magnificent way by two wood boards. In summer, water clay pots

(*tunag*) were being rowed on these *panjarrat* to cool water in them.

The roofs of traditional Karbala houses were used for sleeping at night in the summer. These roofs were all alike as the height of the houses was on the same level. The roof's terrace incorporates a parapet wall (*sitara*) up to a height just above eye level to prevent overlooking between neighbours.

The traditional Karbala house contained a well of still water located in one of its corners which was sometimes used by other neighbouring houses[1].

Bath (*Hammam*)

It was located in one of the corners of the house, the area of which was 2 square meters. The bath contains a small stone pool. Its water was boiled in a large pot outside, then brought in after being boiled, to be poured in the small pool. However, most people in the old city of Karbala used public baths rather than their house's baths[2].

Kitchen

It was one of the main utilities of the house in which food was cooked. It was located in one of the corners of the house in a place away from the source of winds, to keep rooms and other utilities from smoke. It contained an open access in the ceiling like a chimney to extract smoke outside. In addition, there was a

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[1] AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, p. 18, Issue No. 11299, London, 1994.

[2] TUMA, S.H., Karbala fil Thakira, p. 406.

tammur (made of clay), which was used for baking bread, built on the house's roof to extract smoke and heat, especially in summer[1].

[1] MUSTAFA, F., The Arabic House in Iraq in the Islamic Period, p. 126.
- AL-JAHEDH, Al-Bukhalaa', p. 83, Matbaa't Dar al-Maa'rif, Egypt- 1958.

5.6 Ukhaidhir Fortress

The *Ukhaidhir* fortress is considered one of the most important traditional and historical buildings still standing today because of its huge building and uniqueness in design and the high skill in engineering work, architectural elements, decorating work and the sheer size of its utilities.

Location of the Fortress

The fortress is located in the Western Desert, about 50 kilometres to the south west of Karbala city, 152 kilometres of Baghdad and about 17 kilometres to the south of the town of Ain al-Tamr (Shfatha). Its location at the centre of the desert is of special historical importance, since it is in the middle for many commercial routes.

Thus, the fortress passes through the road linking the south of Iraq with the Upper Euphrates and Syria and lies on the road linking Kufa city with Syria. It is also a central point between the Mediterranean- Aleppo- Basra route and the Arabian Sea. Its unique location and the distinct architectural features are the main reasons for attracting tourists and visitors who come from places inside and outside Iraq[1].

[1] Handbook of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq, p.215.

History

The fortress was discovered over three hundred years ago. The first clear reference to it was made in 1625 in the report of the Italian traveller Pietro Dalle Valle followed by Tavernier in 1638, Beawes in 1745, G. Roberts in 1748 and Major John Taylor in 1790[1].

The fortress received keen interest by archaeologists. Thus, a number of books and research studies dealt with the historical, artistic and architectural aspects of this rather mysterious ancient site. This is due to two reasons:-

1. Non existence of any inscriptions on the history of the building such as those usually observed on the facades and interiors of many historical buildings.

2. Absence of clear mention in history books on its history especially in the Arabic, ancient and native records although the fortress building is in relatively good condition in addition to its noticeable huge size[2].

The fortress was examined and studied by many archaeologists and scholars, Arabs and orientalists, and came up with different schools of thought as to its history and original name. Some scholars, such as the French orientalist Louis Massignon and the French traveller Dieulafoy, took it back to the pre-Islamic periods, namely the Sassanian period. However, most archaeologists believe it

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[1] CRESWELL, K. A. C., Early Muslim Architecture, Vol. II, p. 50, Oxford, 1932.

[2] ibid, pp. 50-52.
- BELL, G. L., Palace and Mosque at Ukhaidhir, p. 4, Oxford, 1924.

goes back to the Islamic period and more specially to the first Abbasid period based on architectural and historical evidences[1].

Many scholars who are specialists in Islamic arts and architecture are of the opinion that the architectural basic elements of the *Ukhaidhir* fortress matches with the development in the general Islamic architecture for that period. That is the period lying between the building of *Dar al-Salam* (Baghdad) city in 145 A. H. (762 A. D) and the building of Samarra city in 221 A. H. (836 A. D.) which was the second Abbasid capital built in Iraq after Baghdad. It was found that there is a similarity between the building style of the fortress and the buildings in Samarra[2].

There are many reasons which support the notion that *Ukhaidhir* fortress is of Islamic origin. Thus, excavation work in the fortress building revealed that its foundation is of one origin and the mosque building is original, built with the fortress. Moreover, the *mihrab* (prayer niche) in its southern wall was part of the fortress building and the mosque building was found to have the same features of Islamic mosques[3].

Some historical sources mention that the fortress was built on the ruins of *al-Muqatil* Palace in which Imam Hussain (A. S.) stopped on his way to Karbala in

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[1] CRESWELL, K. A. C, Early Muslim Architecture, Vol. II, p 50.

[2] HAMID, A. A., Sumer, Vol. 37, p.172, 1981.
- Handbook of Archaeological Sites in Iraq, p. 215.

[3] Handbook of Archaeological Sites in Iraq, p. 215.

61 A. H (680 A. D.). The palace was demolished and the fortress was built over its site by Eisa ibn Musa, the eldest nephew of the Abbasid Caliphs Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah and al-Mansour, during the second Hijri century[1].

In any case, *Ukhaidhir* Fortress was erect in about 157 A. H. (773 A. D.) a year before the death of the second Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja'afar al-Mansour (ruled between 134 and 158 A. H.). This was confirmed by the discovery of silver coins minted between 157 A. H. and 162 A. H. (773 A. D. and 778 A. D.)[2].

Origin of Name

Historians were of a different opinion as to the origin of the name of *Ukhaidhir*. Some said that its name which signifies 'the little green one' is to be explained by the outcrop in the midst of the desert. The term *Ukhaidhir* is also familiar to the Bedouins. Thus, the *wadi* (valley) that passes close to the *Ukhaidhir* is known as *al-wadi al-Abyadh* (white valley) relative to the whiteness of its sand.

Others believe that *Ukhaidhir* is derived from *Ukaidir* which is a name of a chief of the Arabic tribe '*Kinda*' who embraced Islam in its early stage[3].

Architectural Features

The fortress is characterised to be a huge defensive building, built of locally

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[1] Handbook of Archaeological Sites in Iraq, p. 216.

[2] QADIR, SHEIKH M., Maskoukat minal Ukhaidhir, Majallat al-Maskoukat, 1st. Issue, Arabic Text, p. 20, Baghdad,1969.
- HAMID, DR. A. A., Sumer, Vol. 37, p. 171.

[3] TUMA, S. H., Turath Karbala, p. 122.
- AL-ATIYYA, DR. J., Asharq al-Awsat Newspaper, Issue No. 6343, Arabic Text, p. 15, London, 1996.

available stone and gypsum. Other parts of the fortress is built of clay brick brought from the area close to Karbala city and gypsum. The building is rectangular in shape and consists of the following main architectural feature (see plate no. 27):

Fortification walls

The fortress is surrounded by a fortification wall whose length from north to south is 175 metres, its width from east to west is 169 metres and its height is about 21 metres. The wall incorporates four main towers located at the four corners, the diameter of each tower is 5 metres. There is also a big tower at the centre of each side of the wall and an entrance in the middle of each of them. Additionally, there are ten other towers in each side, five to the right and five to the left of each entrance, each 3.50 metres in diameter. Thus, the total number of towers in the fortification wall would be 48.

The fortification wall is arcaded up to two thirds of its height. These blind arcades support the walls of the round corridor. The outer arcade serves the purpose of a machicoulis, a narrow space between its arches and the outer face of the main wall enabling the defenders in the round corridor to protect, with missiles, the foot of the wall below them.

The round corridor is 2 metres wide and is linked to rounded chambers built over each tower. It could be reached from the upper most floor of the three storeyed block of the palace, as well as by means of four staircases, one in each of the

UKHAIDHIR FORTRESS - 1995.

angles of the courtyard.

The palace was built adjoined to the northern side of the outer fortification wall and has its own fortification wall in the other three sides, supported by towers.

Internal Buildings

The internal sections are enclosed within a rectangular building adjoined to the outer fortification wall from its northern side whose length is 112 metres and width is 80 metres. The building is supported by 26 towers whose diameter is 1.20 metres each, eight of them are on the western and eastern sides, five on southern side and two towers in the south western and eastern corners.

The interernal sections incorporte:

1- Official Diwan (Great Hall):

This is a rectangular shaped court 15.50 metres wide long by 9 metres wide having four semi cylindrical coloumns in its eastern and western sides with five arches over them. Encircled between them are the entrances of the rooms of the *diwan*. Thus, the entrance on the eastern side leads to the upper floor whereas the other three lead to rooms.

There are two entrances in the last *iwan*, the first one leads to the upper floor whereas the second entrance leads to the mosque. All floors have interlinked chambers.

2- Central Section

A vaulted *rawaq* surrounds this section which separate other parts of the palace. This can be reached through an entrance situated in the centre of the southern side of the great *diwan*, while another entrance leads to the great court. This court is rectangular in shape, 33 metres long by 27 metres wide that opens through four gates from the great *rawaq*. The northern entrance is linked to the great *iwan* whereas the eastern and western entrances lead to the corridor surrounding this part and then to the *haram*. The southern entrance is linked to what is known '*mabain*' (in between). The northern side of the court is higher than other sides. The eastern and western sides consist of recesses or arches in one style while the southern side has a large opening which is considered a facade for the great *iwan*.

3- Great Iwan

This is rectangular in shape, 10.75 meters long by 6 meters wide surmounted by semi cylindrical vault, built of bricks and surrounded by guest courts. Its facade was beautifuly designed as if it was made like a throne. The *iwan* is linked to two halls from the eastern side and furthur on the western side. These halls are rectanguler in shape, 10 meters long by 4.65 meters wide. They were decorated with a series of arches and gypsum works in stucco. There is a rectangular yard overlooked by the *iwan* with a number of courts around it and an entrance leading to the great *rawaq* in the centre of the southern side of the yard. A number of gates open to the *rawaq*.

The Mosque

This is rectangular in shape, 24 metres long by 15.50 wide with an entrance at the *bahou* and another at the western corridor which seperates the fortification wall and the northern part that represents the palace and its utilities.

The mosque is surrounded by *rawaqs* from its *qibla*, eastern and western directions and are supported by a line of columns on each side, surmounted by arches that are decorated with beautiful geometric design. The *mihrab* is concave in shape.

Excavations carried out in the area revealed that its building is an original part of the *Ukhaidhir* fortress and was not recently built or has been added at a later stage.

The mosque has three entrances, two lead to it through the northen corridor and are located in the northern side of the mosque *sahan*. The third entrance is located in the south eastern corner of the mosque and lead to the *bahou*.

Guards Section

This is located to the east of the *bahou* and adjoins the fortification wall from the north. It leads to the wall through an entrance in the long corridor. There is also another entrance whose shape is inclined and bent. It leads to the first floor through side entrance on the right side of the staircase and to the second floor after changing direction to the south until reaching the second floor.

This section consists of one floor except the western side which consists of two floors because of its link to the rooms and utilities of the guards which are located on the top of the main entrance.

Residential Houses

These are four houses that are independent of each other, two of them located to the east of the central section and the other two to the west of this section. There is an enterance in the *rawaq* of each house. The houses are almost similar in design and respective location. Each house has a rectangular shaped open courtyard (*sahan*) and its sides are arcaded. The arcades are surmounted with arches supported on coloumns. The house entrance is situated in the central arcade. The northern and southern facades are almost similar in design and in the number of halls and utilities. The design incorporates *iwans* which is a style similar to the Hirah architecture (named after Hirah city close to Kufa).

The Servent's Section

This is a large building which consists of a rectangular shaped *sahan* and eight halls whose ceilings are vaulted and domed. It is isolated from the other residential houses and is situated in the rear of the central section and reception rooms.

The Bath (*Hammam*)

It is a rectangular shaped building situated between the south most house and servants section, 9.90 meters long by 9.30 meters wide. Its entrance lies in the

south eastern corner of the great *rawaq*. The bath is surrounded by an internal wall in addition to the main wall that is part of the palace itself as it is exclusive for the palace. The walls are built of brick and mortar and the path has a main interior entrance situated in the south eastern corner of the great *rawaq* and has side entrances. The bathing section consists of three interlaced halls leading to the entrance on the western side. The general design of the bath is similar to those designed during the Islamic periods.

External Buildings

There are buildings situated outside the fortress, the first one located to the right of the northern (main) entrance. The building is rectangular in shape, 76 metres long by 12 metres wide, consisting of 14 vaulted rooms. Each one is similar to an *iwan* open on both sides, with a staircase leading to the roof of the building. There is a rectangular yard, 33.20 metres long by 24.70 metres wide. It is situated between the rectangular building built on the northen side and the fortification wall on the western side. There is also a small building in the north eastern side of the fortress and is similar in design to the bath (*hammam*)[1].

[1] BELL, G. L., Amurath to Amurath, pp. 147- 155.
- CRESWELL, K. A. C., Early Muslim Architecture, Vol. II, pp. 52- 70.
- Handbook of the Archaeological Sites in Iraq, pp. 216- 217.
- AL-ANSARI, R., Al-Hayat Newspaper, Issue No. 12008, p. 21, London 1996.

Chapter VI: Proposals for Redevelopment

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is mainly concerned with the existing open area between and around the two holy shrines. It occupies from the architectural point of view an important part of the overall built up areas of Karbala city. In addition to representing the city centre, this area, prior to its demolition after the Gulf war, in 1991, used to be an integrated unit whose focal point is the two holy shrines. This is reflected in the architecture of the city as a whole so that its centre occupies a pivotal position in relation to other parts of the city.

The inherent relationship between the two holy shrines and the surrounding area appears to be active and in continuous interaction. Thus, if the livelihood of the area between and around the two holy shrines is derived from its relationship with the shrines, then the whole city of Karbala would be lively as a result of its relationship to the city centre. This interaction is clear in the economical, social, cultural and architectural aspects that are described below:

a- Economic aspects: This area was until a few years ago the main commercial artery in the city where the traditional or modern type of trading used to flourish. Thus, markets were widespread and crowded with pilgrims and city inhabitants throughout the year.

b- Social aspects: The historic position and inherited traditions of this area had given Karbala city its conservative identity. It was also, until a few years ago, a gathering centre of city residents and a focal point of their social life.

c- Cultural aspect: The area that had constituted the two holy shrines, religious schools and cultural houses had given the city of Karbala its well known speciality as a city open to other cultures such as that of the Persian, Turkish and Indian and also to a number of political orientations.

d- Architectural aspect: This is especially our main concern in this chapter. The study area is considered the heart of the city and the centre of its main traffic and pedestrian movements where all important streets used to exist.

In addition to the two holy shrines, this area incorporated most of the traditional, cultural and religious buildings of Karbala city such as religious schools, *hussainiyat*, traditional markets (*souks*) and traditional houses. In general, this area represented the source and spirit of cultural inheritance that made Karbala distinct from other Islamic cities.

However, this city was subjected in recent years to extensive damage especially in its buildings to the degree that one can say that the city's historical influence or at least the existence of its main characteristics are seriously threatened. Overall, the city suffers from acute problems that requires urgent attention and practical steps in order to start its maintenance and repair work.

The most serious problem of real concern is that related to the conversion of the city centre, previously known for many centuries to be rich in inheritance of buildings, to a huge empty space after demolition of all historical buildings that used to lie between and around the two holy shrines.

The city centre at present also suffers from a random building activity that is being implemented around the huge open space. This is threatening to erase the area of its main architectural features that was behind its traditional, religious and cultural identity.

This area deserves special attention in this study because of the demolition of all the centres of commercial activities previously in existence which had given it a special position as a pivotal area and a dynamic relationship with the old city and the areas around it, especially in relation to the new quarters. Hence, our stress on the vital importance to restore the city centre is because it is considered the principal guarantee for reviving the activities that used to exist in the traditional markets (*souks*) and shopping arcades (*kaiseriyat*). It will form a new link between the centre and other city areas. Additionally, the historical identity of buildings in Karbala depends on this area from the architectural and design points of view. This stems from the fact that this area represents the focal point in the visual zone in the building design of the city. Similarly, the two holy shrines represents the focal point in the visual zone of the study area.

The above reasons are the main factors that encouraged me to carry out the study

of this particular area. Although this area was restricted to the city centre of Karbala, namely, between and around the two holy shrines, nevertheless, it represents in actual fact the old city of Karbala. Of course, the study of all the city requires a further study that should incorporate legislations as a basis for a new building design of the city to respond to the basic features of the traditional environment of city buildings.

This chapter includes:

1- Architectural Study of the Area Between the Two Holy Shrines

a- Architectural Study of the Present Situation of the City Centre and Surrounding Area.

b- Main Aspects of the Proposed Architectural Development and Replanning of the Study Area

2- Suggestions and Recommendations.

6.2 Architectural Study of the Area Between the Two Holy Shrines

6.2.1 Architectural Study of the Present Situation of the City Centre and Surrounding Area

So far the most relevant historical and architectural aspects of the city of Karbala has been dealt with. In this chapter, the nature of problems, influential factors and the attitude of the responsible Iraqi authorities to its religious and cultural values will be studied. The study will cover the description of the significance of each of these aspects and show its dimensions. These points are summarised as follows:

1. Existing Shape of city skyline.

2. Land use.

3. Present condition of existing buildings.

4. Environment and architectural fabric of the area.

5. Traffic and pedestrian movements and parking areas.

6. City potentials as a place for tourist and pilgrims.

7. Background of the different architectural styles of traditional buildings.

8. Factors affecting changes in population.

1. Existing Shape of City Skyline

Karbala is considered a typical example of a holy shrine city in Iraq similar to Najaf, Kadhimia and Samarra. However, Karbala is unique in having two shrines instead of one.

The old city of Karbala extends up to the ring road and has an area of about 0.951 square kilometres. The two holy shrines are situated in the centre of this old city. The route of the ring road mostly passes alongside the green areas that surrounds the city except from the western and south western side. This has resulted in the extension of the city to be mainly in these two directions.

A study of the dimensions of the old city relative to its centre, represented by the two holy shrines and the area between them, reveals that its boundaries which reaches the ring road is about 300 metres away from the city centre in the direction of *al-Mukhaiyam*, *Bab al-Taq* and *Bab al-Khan* quarters. However, this distance is about 800 metres away in the direction of *Bab Baghdad* and *Bab al-Salalma* quarters. These distances are considered to be within the acceptable walking distance of normal people. In other words, the size and shape of the old city is dependent on pedestrian environment.

This feature can be utilised in moving the traffic away from the centre to the ring

road especially during the important religious occasions. Thus, some of the streets can be converted to pedestrian only streets especially those close to the centre.

In the Muslim world it is considered that the holy mosque or holy shrine will be the centre of the city. In Karbala both the two holy shrines and the area between them are considered the centre of the city skyline. Thus, the two holy shrines whose minarets are about 44 metres high and its domes are about 39 meters high are the main dominating characteristics on the city skyline.

The characteristics of the structure of the two holy shrines represent an important part in the replanning and redevelopment of the city centre. Thus, emphasis should be put on its position and serious steps have to be taken to preserve the heritage of this area.

However, the present policy of the Iraqi authorities of keeping the status quo of the relatively huge open area between the two holy shrines and adding new buildings around this area without proper planning and architectural study will lead to the weakening of the status and sanctity of the shrines and leave them within an area of an incoherent architectural fabric.

2. Land Use

An architectural study of the old city at present reveals that there are three main outlets of land use which dominates the structure of the city and its architectural

characteristics as a reflection of its religious importance. These outlets are:

a- Holy Shrines, Religious and Traditional Buildings:

i- The two holy shrines of Imam Hussain and al-Abbas:

These two buildings together with the open area between them are considered the centre of the old city. However, the two shrines continue to dominate other buildings in the city skyline.

ii- Mosques, Hussainiyat, Religious and Traditional Buildings:

It is noticeable that the density of these buildings was high around the shrines before the demolition of the city centre in 1991. This density decreases as one moves further from the centre towards the suburbs. The above buildings together with the two holy shrines used to reflect the characteristics of a religious city prior to the demolition of the centre.

b- Commercial Use

Trade represents the main economic activity of the city, about 45% of the inhabitants of the old city are engaged in various trades and businesses. The residents of the city largely depend on commercial activity attributed to the flow of pilgrims throughout the year. The number of pilgrims increases from 5 to 8 times the normal level during Islamic weekends (Thursday and Friday) and the pilgrimage seasons. Their number multiplies to over 100 times the normal flow during the important religious occasions such as the visitation (*ziyaret*) of the middle of *Shaaban*, *Ashura* (10th of *Muharram*) and the Twentieth of *Safar* (the

Arba'iniyat of martyrdom of Imam Hussain).

The commercial areas in the old city are divided into two main types:

i. Traditional Markets (*Souks*):

These are characterised as traditional and oriental markets, the most important of which are *al-Tujjar*, *al-Hussain* and *al-Abbas souks*. However, they were demolished in recent years in spite of the fact that these *souks* used to constitute with the two holy shrines and others buildings a coherent structure. This coherence is due to the connection of these markets to the pedestrian access leading to the shrines.

Besides the main *souks*, there are other traditional markets that escaped demolition and still exist today. These markets are within the old city and lead to the main entrances of the two holy shrines. Examples of these markets are *al-Makhaiyam* and *Bab al-Khan souks* that are considered secondary access markets and are linked to the main commercial and residential areas.

ii. Commercial Area:

This area is concentrated in the streets around the two holy shrines and also those leading to it. These streets include those opened after 1980 such as the pedestrian street between the two holy shrines and *Bab al-Sultania* street. Others are those streets widened after 1955 such as *al-Abbas*, *al-Alqami*, *al-Sidra* and *Bab al-Qibla* streets. The front sections at the ground floor of buildings located in these

streets are used as retail shops. The upper floors incorporate residential flats, tourist accommodation and offices occupied by various professions such as medical doctors and solicitors.

In recent years, following the demolition of the large *souks* in the city centre, especially after the uprising of March 1991, some of the main streets out of the city centre but inside the old city became commercial centres particularly in the street leading to al-Hindiya (Twairij) town.

Besides the above two types of commercial activities, there is another type of activity that has recently become popular as a shopping area within the residential quarters of the old city in order to meet the needs of both inhabitants and pilgrims. These areas are scattered in *Bab Baghdad*, *Bab al-Khan*, *Bab al-Taq*, *Bab al-Najaf* and *al-Mukhaiyam* quarters.

c- Residential Use

Residential areas represent about 75% of the traditional architectural fabric of the old city. These areas used to be close to the boundary wall of the *sahans* of the two shrines. However, following the demolition of the city centre in 1991, the open area between the two shrines and around them now separate the residential area from the two holy shrines.

Most buildings in residential areas suffer from lack of maintenance and repair work. Very little or hardly any of such work has been carried out to conserve

these buildings.

3. Present Condition of Existing Buildings

In general, about 65% of the buildings in the old city are in poor condition, eroded and damaged. This especially applies to those buildings close to the city centre. On the other hand, buildings of reasonable condition represent about 25% of the total. The new buildings of no particular style represent about 10% of the total buildings in the old city, especially those overlooking the newly opened and widened streets. The styles of such buildings are not coherent with the architectural fabric of the old city.

The historical and architectural values of the inherited culture and the traditional architectural fabric of the city require a thorough and strategic development in order to preserve the traditional, religious and local identity of the city. Most of the traditional buildings require continuous maintenance work in order to preserve them.

4. Environment and Architectural Fabric of the Area

Karbala is considered one of the cities that has relatively preserved its architectural fabric for many centuries due to factors related to its religious, historical and strategic location. However, the demolition of its city centre in recent years damaged the city's traditional architecture to such an extent that both its Islamic

identity and characteristics are now threatened and likely to change.

Urgent and serious steps should be taken to restore the completely demolished buildings and preserve the remaining parts and any future work should be based on scientific study that have to take into account the repair of all partially damaged buildings. It can be observed that the most important event in recent years that has dramatically and adversely affected the city architectural fabric was the demolition of its centre, namely the area between the two holy shrines and the surrounding areas.

Thus, this demolition has resulted in the disappearance of one of the most relevant historical features of a city that is regarded one of the most prominent cities in the Islamic world. As a consequence, the predominance of the two open courtyards (*sahans*) of the two holy shrines in the city has been lost especially after the creation of the vast open area between the two holy shrines which has now become the dominant open area in the city.

Another error was committed by the Endowment Directorate (*awqaf*) in Baghdad who considered the exteriors of the boundary walls of the *sahans* as monuments without giving the actual shrine inside the walls its respect and sanctity.

The most important and unique characteristic of the city's architectural fabric are the dominance of the two holy shrines over the architectural fabric of the city where the shrines used to be a link to the area around it. However, this

characteristic disappeared after the recent demolition of the area between the shrines and the area around it.

5. Traffic and Pedestrian Movements and Parking Areas

a- Traffic Movement

The traffic movement in the old city consists of two main types:

i. Traffic movement within the traditional buildings of the residential quarters and inside the routes of the traditional markets (*souks*).

ii. Traffic movements in the newly opened streets in the old city and in the widened streets. All of these terminate at the core of the city. Beside these, it also includes movements in the city ring road.

This network is interconnected to the high roads that links the old city of Karbala to other Iraqi cities. Sometimes, traffic congestion used to occur especially in the streets leading to the city centre of Karbala.

b- Pedestrian movements

Pedestrians used to encounter problems when they moved in the city centre especially during the important religious occasions. In spite of opening new streets, widening of others and the creation of the open area between the two holy shrines, problems of movement of pilgrims and religious caravans in the city centre and in the areas around it were not resolved. The routes of pedestrian cross movements clash and interfere with the car traffic especially in the streets leading to the city centre.

c- Car Parking Areas

There are two distinct types of car parking areas in the city:

i. On-street parking: These are scattered in most of the city streets especially those leading to the city centre.

ii. Off-street Parking: These are very few and are not proportional to the size of cars entering the city during normal working days and weekends. Examples of such parking are those at *Bab al-Qibla* (an entrance to Imam Hussain shrine), the beginning of *al-Sultania* street facing Imam Hussain shrine and at *al-Abbas* street.

It is to be noted that no clear policy is being used to control car parking inside the city and no car park buildings are available. Moreover, lack of planning in the city centre has resulted in severe congestions throughout the old city.

d- Parking Areas of Public Transport

The parking areas of inter-city passenger transport is not proportional to the number of pilgrims and the services provided to them. This situation has resulted in the disruption of traffic movement of both vehicles and pedestrians. Examples of such parking are those at the entrances of the city leading to the cities of Baghdad, Hilla and Najaf. It is rather unfortunate to learn that parking areas were recently opened inside this old city which has also led to the entrance of coaches. This latter development will cause further disruption and increase pollution of the city. Example of such a situation is the site of *khan Abul Dihin* and *khan Qendi*.

6. City Potentials as a Place for Tourist and Pilgrims

Visitors travel to Karbala for two main reasons:

i. Religious

The purpose of such a visit is to perform religious rituals by pilgrims that mainly involve visiting the holy shrines and other religious places. Movements of pilgrims circulate between these places and commercial centres such as the *souks*.

ii. Tourist

In this case, visitors travel to this city in order to see its tourist attractions such as the holy shrines as it is viewed to be one of the most magnificent work of Islamic architecture in the Muslim world. Further attractions are the other religious buildings, traditional markets (*souks*), *khans*, *maqams*, traditional buildings and other tourist sites around the city such as *al-Ukhaidhir* fortress, *Razzaza* lake and Ain al-Tamr springs.

A field study carried out in 1988 by Karbala's Endowment Directorate (*awqaf*) revealed that the average number of pilgrims arriving to the city in normal week days is about 11,000 while during Thursdays and Fridays (Islamic weekend) rises to about 50,000. On Islamic festival days such *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*, the average number increases to about 80,000- 100,000.

However, on important religious occasions such as the visitation of the middle of

Sha'ban, the first ten days of *Muharram* to the day of *Ashura* and the twentieth of *Safar* (*Arba'een* of Imam Hussain), the size of pilgrims reaches about 1 to 1.5 millions. Some of these pilgrims stay in the city from 2 to 5 days while others only stay for a day or just an evening.

Thus, we conclude that there is a real need for providing spacious areas to accommodate this large number of pilgrims and adequate services during their stay in the city. Covered areas and temporary accommodation are required in the city centre and around it to cater for their movement and rest. At present, the crowding of pilgrims on the pavements within the city centre creates a serious problem that is not fit to the religious nature and cultural status of the holy city.

Moreover, the tourist aspects of the study area between and around the two holy shrines and also those surrounding the old city should be studied so as to realize a practical and concrete tourist project to attract the tourist and pilgrims to the city of Karbala. This is especially needed since there is lack of tourist services and tourist complexes that includes accommodation and amenities in and around the city.

7- Background of the Different Architectural Style of Traditional Buildings

Having studied the history and architecture of the old city of Karbala, it is observed that since its establishment, the city architecture is influenced by styles of different Islamic cultures in various periods especially during the Abbasid

period. This is due to the attention given by some of the Abbasid Caliphs and other Muslim rulers in the Muslim countries. Thus, buildings in the city started to assume a particular architectural style especially the holy shrines and other religious buildings. Such buildings are known for their greatness, high walls and entrances and open courtyards that are considered the most important planning and architectural features of buildings in Karbala.

The aesthetic elements of the different Islamic architecture can be observed on the religious buildings during that period. Examples of such elements are the decorating work with local clay bricks (*a'jur*), gypsum, *qashani* and Arabesque.

The above work consisted of geometric and calligraphic decorations that displayed the competence of calligraphic style predominant in that period. This type of work is considered the basis of Islamic art adopted on buildings in the city of Karbala.

Arabic calligraphy was regarded as one of most popular art which was used in decorating the exteriors and interiors of religious buildings. This art was inscribed in two methods:

i. *Kufi* calligraphic style named after the Kufa city in Iraq. It is characterised by straight letters with sharp corners.

ii. Nuskh calligraphic style. Its letters are flexible and curved.

The above two styles were inscribed in a beautiful and professional manner especially in the case of the *Kufi* style which used Qur'anic verses to decorate these buildings.

The *qashani* tiles were used in decorating religious building during the Abbasid period especially in the third and fourth Hijri century. This type of art spread in Muslim countries particularly in Iran, Central Asia and Syria. Karbala has a distinctive role in making the *qashani* tiles and its application to decorate mainly the two holy shrines and other religious buildings.

During the Mongol period, especially in the Jala'ir rule of Iraq, coloured and glazed ceramic decorating work was used to cover the exteriors and interiors of the shrines especially the holy shrine of Imam Hussain and *al-Abed* minaret that was annexed to it.

During the Safavid period, the rulers paid special attention to the holy shrines and its decorating work. Thus, *qashani* tiles, *a'jur* and gypsum were used in decorating the religious building. *muqarnasat* decorating elements with local clay brick and gypsum were used in such buildings which were covered with pieces of multi-coloured glazed ceramic. The decorating works left a beautiful appearance on these places and gave it a sentimental feeling particularly during worship.

Latticed wood was used as a decorating work over the graves of Imam Hussain and his brother al-Abbas.

Gilded tiles were used for the first time during the Safavid period both in Karbala and other religious cities in Iraq to cover the domes and minarets of the holy shrines. This art played a role in glorifying the architecture of religious cities and this has distinguished it from other Islamic cities in the Muslim world.

Decorating work with wood, well known as *shanasheel* (bay windows) was used during the British occupation of Iraq. This beautiful art was brought by the Indians who came along with the British army in their occupation of Iraq. This art was used in Karbala and other Iraqi cities such as Baghdad and Basra.

Local building materials in Karbala had clearly influenced the development of the architectural style of its buildings. This applies especially to materials such as clay brick (*a'jur*), gypsum and *qashani* tiles. Thus, industry related to the making of these materials became widespread inside and outside the city.

The building materials that were used in Karbala was not limited to those locally produced but imported materials such as marble, coloured stones and rare wood were also employed to cover and decorate many of the city buildings especially those religious ones.

8- Factors Affecting Changes in Population

Official statistics published by the Iraqi government shows that the population of the city of Karbala in 1971 was 102, 213[1] while the last census in Iraq of 1985

[1] Adhwa Kashifa ala Muhafadhat Karbala, Bulletin of the Province of Karbala, Arabic Text, p. 3, Karbala Iraq, 1971.

indicates that the total population of the city of Karbala was 184, 574[1].

Thus, this city has witnessed during the 14 years between 1971 and 1985 an overall population growth of about 81%. This is a relatively high growth rate compared to other Iraqi cities. This high rate stems from the mass emigration from the countryside and other Iraqi cities especially from the southern areas.

The existence of holy shrines and good employment opportunities in Karbala attracted a lot of people to migrate and settle in this city and thus, resulted in a big increase in its population. This is a very similar pattern to that encountered in tourist areas and places of interest[2].

During the Iraq- Iran war which continued for 8 years from 1980- 1988, it was noticed that the population of Karbala increased as a result of the flow of some of the inhabitants of other Iraqi cities especially those from southern provinces to settle in Karbala and other holy cities. This flow stems from the fact that the Iraqis knew that the Iranians would avoid bombing holy cities in Iraq as it is considered sacred by the Iranian Muslims. The increase in population persisted in spite of the deportation of thousands of Iraqi citizens from Karbala to Iran by the Iraqi authorities on the pretence that they were of Iranian origins.

Most of the new immigrants in Karbala settled in new quarters that were planned

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[1] Encyclopedia Britannica, p. 741.

[2] AL-ANSARI, DR. F., Sukkan al-Iraq, Arabic Text, pp. 59- 119, 1st printing, Damascus, 1970.

by the Iraqi authorities. On the other hand, the population in the old city decreased for the following factors:

1. Crowding of the old city since the fifties resulted in setting up new quarters outside the city that had large and more spacious houses and thus encouraged some of the inhabitants of the old city to move to the new quarters.

2. Opening of new streets and widening of others especially in the city centre resulted in the demolition of many houses and conversion of the frontal parts of the ground floor of houses overlooking these streets to retail shops.

3. Lands on the outskirts of the city were initially sold at a nominal price during the fifties and mortgage was given to the people by the banks at a low interest and thus creating another incentive for building houses on these lands.

4. Increase in the standard of living since the fifties and more especially in the seventies and eighties encouraged the people to build big houses in the new quarters.

5. Following the uprising in March 1991, the old city and more especially the city centre suffered damages and destruction which forced most of its inhabitants to flee to other Iraqi cities especially to the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

6. Negligence of the city by the central government in Iraq and the pursuit by the

security officers to families whose sons took part in the 1991 Uprising coupled with the economic sanctions by the UN since 1991 forced some of these families to flee Karbala to other Iraqi cities and others to leave Iraq in order to seek safe refuge and look for better employment opportunities.

6.2.2 Main Aspects of the Proposed Architectural Development and Replanning of the Study Area

The most important of these aspects will be dealt with in the following proposals:

1. Criteria of the Architectural Design.

2. Strategies for future development of the sites around study area.

3. Proposals for land use.

4. Outline of proposal for replanning and development.

5. Proposals for future traffic and pedestrian movements and parking areas.

6. Proposals for attracting tourists and pilgrims.

7. Architectural styles and elements to be adopted in new buildings.

1. Criteria of the Architectural Design

i. Restore the two holy shrines to its original architectural shape within the architectural fabric to that before the demolition of the city centre in the area between and around the two shrines. Stress should be given to the importance of the shrines, and their role as a focal point of the city architectural skyline and as functional and visual landmarks dominating the city.

ii. Rebuilding the area around the two holy shrines based on architectural standards that are consistent to a new proposed design of that part of the city centre lying between the two holy shrines and other built up areas in the city.

iii. Revival of the commercial area lying between the two holy shrines that was demolished in recent years especially the big traditional *souks* and *kaiseriyat* through which lies the main pedestrian areas between the two holy shrines.

iv. Linking the new main commercial area with other commercial areas in the old city by new pedestrian access in an environment that offers attraction, comfort and integration between the two areas and thus, create a city centre that represents continuity in the development of architecture of the religious centre of the city.

v. Present the elements of traditional architecture of the city and put emphasis on its characteristics such that it would symbolise the uniqueness of the religious centre of Karbala.

These elements should be applied in a modern way in the process of planning and designing the city centre between the two holy shrines.

vi. Stress to achive integration and links between the new buildings of the study area, the shrines, the area around them and the architectural fabric of the residential areas in the old city. Moreover, there should also be a link between the new markets and the residential and commercial areas of the old city in order to develop and revive the commercial activities and achieve a complete integrated development with its architectural character of the old city.

vii. Ensure continuity of the pedestrian access along the whole length of the study area such that this area would be considered the main access of pedestrian movement and its connection to the ring road that surrounds the old city.

The overall objective should assert on the religious and cultural identity of the historical centre of the city, show its architectural position and restore its resources of cultural origins.

2. Strategies for Future Development of the Sites Around Study Area

The sites surrounding the study area incorporate buildings that differ in their structural condition and architectural character. Thus, the strategies for restoration of each building or a group of buildings depends on the following basis:

i. The present structural condition of the building. Steps should be taken to demolish buildings with poor structural conditions which are beyond repair, and renovate the rest specially buildings with some architectural interest and character.

ii. The extent to which a building is making efficient use of the built land. In this situation, this will require removal of buildings whose land use is not efficient enough in comparison to its functional size, price of land and its location relative to the city centre.

iii. Suitability of function and use in relation to the proposed land use. This will entail removal of the buildings whose locations represents an obstacle to developing the site around the study area.

iv. Architectural and historical values and the traditional features acquired by buildings.

v. Location of the building in relation to the architectural fabric around the study area and the effect of the building on the holding together of the fabric.

vi. Inconsistency of the buildings with the guidelines of the proposed architectural design of the study area. This will require removal of buildings in bad conditions built in western style that is inconsistent with the architectural fabric and those damaging the architectural features of the area especially the holy shrines and the proposed buildings between them.

vii. Discontinuing in the line of buildings on the streets around the study area, i. e. existence of empty spaces between some of the buildings, differing heights between buildings and discontinuity of the covered pavements in front of buildings.

viii. Visual characteristics and its extent of representation of traditional features, e.g. visual connection of the proposed new markets of the study area with the two holy shrines.

3. Proposals for Land Use

i. The guidelines for the proposed land use of the study area should emphasize the importance of the religious activity areas of the city centre, which is mainly represented by the two holy shrines. These shrines are the dominating units that specifies the architectural shape of the city centre and not the proposed shopping activities such as the new markets. i. e. the link between the religious and traditional commercial activities should be strengthened without permitting the commercial activities to damage the religious and historical identity of the city.

ii. The proposed land use should take into account the special status and religious importance of the city especially the position of the two holy shrines within the architectural fabric around them. This situation should prevent strange or crowded buildings from affecting the dignity and sanctity of the two shrines and restrict these uses to those directly related to the requirement of movements of

pilgrims.

iii. Special areas should be selected to be pedestrian zones. However, certain services such ambulances and fire fighting vehicles would be allowed to use them in emergencies especially around the main access between and around the two shrines. In addition, the movement of these vehicles should be facilitated between their centres and the public car parks in the ring road.

iv. The proposed land use should not allow large buildings, big hotels and bus terminals to be built close to the city centre such that it would affect the coherence and the continuity of the architectural fabric of the city centre with the areas around it.

v. Increase facilities related to the main religious function of the city specially serving the large numbers of pilgrims. These facilities could be hotels, private accommodation for pilgrims (houses and flats), restaurants, cafés, shops, public conveniences and public baths.

vi. Utilise the tourist sites such as *al-Razzaza* lake, *al-Ukhaidhir* fortress, water springs of Ain al-Tamr, the orchards surrounding the old city and the historical and traditional buildings in the city. These sites will no doubt improve the economic and social condition of the city.

vii. Restore buildings that are of religious, cultural, educational and traditional

nature such as mosques, *hussainiyat*, religious schools and libraries in order to preserve the religious identity of the city and ensure that commercial activities are not dominant here.

viii. Improve the conditions of the residential areas in the old city in order to stop the migration to other areas, attract newcomers and preserve the residential functions.

These objectives are achieved by adopting a balanced policy that combines preservation, renewal and redevelopment of houses such that houses in bad condition are repaired and those beyond repair are demolished so that they can be rebuilt again. The residential areas should also be provided with social and educational facilities such as schools, nurseries, medical and social centres by utilising the unused areas and sites of the demolished buildings.

4. Outline of Proposal for Replanning and Development

The proposed architectural basis of design, guidelines and planning for the study area vary according to each area to be built and can be divided as follows:

The Area Lying between the Two Holy Shrines (Open Area):

A proposal is suggested to redesign and replan this area such that it should form with the two holy shrines an integrated and coherent architectural unit. No doubt, the most practical and realistic proposal would involve the creation of a spacious

open courtyard (*sahan*) along with its attached buildings. This new *sahan* would coherently link the two holy shrines with the city architectural fabric since it could be considered a natural extension of the two *sahans* of Imam Hussain and al-Abbas shrines. Furthermore, it would accommodate the expectedly huge number of pilgrims during the important religious occasion. Thus, the spatial connection between the new *sahan* and the two shrines is achieved through the traditional entrances of the boundary walls of the two shrines *sahans* (see plate nos. 28 & 29).

The ground floor of the northern and southern sides of the new open courtyard (*sahan*) would have a longitudinal building incorporating a chain of shops selling local handicrafts especially articles of religious values. Two new wide and covered *rawaqs* should precede the shops overlooking the new *sahan* and surmounted with arches similar to those surrounding the *sahan* of the shrines from the inside. This would preserve the overall Islamic architectural features of the city centre. Moreover, this would maintain the dignity and sacredness of the two shrines and keep away the new *sahan* from noise and air pollution of outside traffic.

The *rawaqs* (wide corridors) are each covered by an upper floor, that is a covered *rawaq*. These *rawaqs* together constitute a part of the new proposed markets (*souks*). These *rawaqs* can be used as resting places, during several times of the year, especially on the important religious occasions. The covers of the *rawaqs* are to be built according to the traditional building elements such as arches, domes

and vaults, by using modern architectural methods.

The height of all proposed buildings to be situated between and around the two holy shrines should not exceed two storeys or the height of the two boundary walls of the two shrines. This will retain the superiority and richness of its Islamic architecture in relation to the architectural fabric of low height building surrounding the city centre in order to emphasis the roles of the holy shrines as architectural master pieces and the two dominating elements on the city, both functionally and visually (see plate no. 30).

However, the architect Professor Makiya proposes to link the study area between the two holy shrines with a huge open area surrounded by buildings very similar to the Plaza that exists in European cities.

The above proposal was given in a recorded interview made with Professor Makiya in March, 1997.

Having studied this proposal, the following points have been concluded:

1- The proposal would not be in line with the local architectural fabric of the area and the socio-religious nature of the city.

2- The proposal is incoherent with the dignity and sanctity of the two holy shrines.

On the other hand, the proposal presented in this study consists of a new huge *sahan* in the study area connecting the two holy shrines and interacting with them in function is more practical and consistent with the religious nature of the city centre.

This new proposed *sahan* can be considered an integral part of the buildings of the two shrines and is subject to the same rules and regulations of the two *sahans* of these two shrines.

Proposed Small Hotels

The proposal is to include a number of buildings in the surrounding area of the two holy shrines as small hotels for pilgrims and tourists.

The buildings can consist of a ground floor, a mezzanine and a first floor. The ground floor may be allocated as retail shops whereas the mezzanine may partly be used as reception offices and sitting rooms and the rest as bedrooms. The first floor may include bedrooms and their utilities.

Some of the hotels can convert the first floor into small flats to accommodate the families of pilgrims and tourists.

The architectural features of the above buildings should be designed to be coherent with the general architectural features of other proposed buildings lying between the two holy shrines.

Proposed new Markets (*souks*) Within the Study Area:

The objective of the proposed architectural treatment of the traditional markets (*souks*) in the study area is to revive the continuity of the traditional style of the *souks* that were in existence in the city centre before its demolition. Its ideas should be implemented so that it combines the original and modern styles and stress on the religious identity of this city.

The most important treatments are described below:

a. Two new large markets (*souks*) are proposed on either side of the new proposed *sahan* whereby each *souk* becomes attached to each long building enclosing the *sahan*, one from its northern and the other from its southern side. The aim in building the two new proposed *souks* is to revive it and in honor to the old *souks*, namely *al-Hussain* and *al-Arab souks*, since both *souks* possessed valuable heritage and memories (see plate nos. 29 & 30).

Furthermore, it is also proposed that each new *souk* open to the new *sahan* through many entrances, each leading to a main access of either existing secondary market or main artery of the old city such as *al-Abbas* and *al-Sidra* streets. Each *souk* is to be divided into many sections separated by a covered square which connects the new proposed *souks* with the new *sahan* on one side and the parking areas on the other. Staircases leading to the first floor of the *souk* and the *rawaqs* overlooking the new *sahan* are proposed on both side of the covered square.

Each section of the new *souk* consists of two floors. The ground floor incorporate the retail shops which are situated on either side of the main access of the *souk* that is two floor high to place extra emphasis on its importance and different feeling to that when walking in the other secondary pedestrian access.

The first floor is proposed to contain some other retail shops and shops selling local handicrafts. These shops are preceded by wide passageways overlooking the main access of the ground floor of the *souk*.

Here, the height of the new *souks* should not exceed that of the boundary walls of the *sahans* of the two holy shrines or that of the new proposed *sahan* linking the two holy shrines. Similarly, it should not exceed the height of the existing residential and shopping areas.

It is also suggested that the building style of the new *souks* should be built according to the traditional methods bearing in mind that moderns architectural techniques should also be followed.

Proposed Public Conveniences

It is proposed that the plan of the study area should comprise buildings, each with two floors, to be used as public conveniences, where the ground floor is used by men and the first floor by women. These are to be situated on either side of the new proposed *sahan* at either end of the new proposed *souks* so that it can be used by both pilgrims and city inhabitants. Their size should take into account the

higher number of pilgrims during important religious occasions.

Proposed Free Drinking Water Points (*al-Sabeel*)

A proposal is also made to install many points to provide free drinking water in different places within and around the study area. This will cater for the needs of pilgrims and city residents especially during religious occasions and the very hot summer. This would be a similar practice to what was previously existing in many places of the city most of which were removed during the demolition of the city centre. However, the new drinking water points should be built by employing new water supply and cooling methods.

Proposed Public Baths (*Hammams*)

Public baths are vital utilities that serve some pilgrims and city residents especially during the important religious occasions since it is considered one of the social and religious traditions which very much resemble the Turkish bath. Moreover, it is also used by those pilgrims who come for a short visit lasting only few hours and thus, will need a bath to prepare themselves for prayers and also before entering the holy shrines.

Therefore, the proposed new plan of the city centre should allocate sites for a number of public bathes to be built separately for men and women. These sites are recommended to be distributed around the study area. The baths are to be designed according to the traditional building style well known in Iraq in addition to using the modern architectural techniques. Local building materials such as

clay bricks (*a'jur*), gypsum and some decorating work with *qashani* tiles on the facade of the buildings can be used in addition to other materials such as cement, steel, stone, ceramic tiles and marble.

Proposed Medical Clinics

The flow of a large number of pilgrims during important religious occasions creates overcrowding which may result in injuries requiring urgent medical treatment or first aid. Therefore, it is suggested that the new plan and design of the city centre should include a number of medical clinics around the study area in locations where it would be smooth and easy for ambulances to transfer the patient to hospitals outside the old city in case he needs further medical attention.

Proposed Police Stations

Two police stations are suggested in the study area to serve the city centre one on each side of the proposed *souks*.

Al-Hussaniya al-Haideriya (Conference Hall)

It is suggested that the proposed plan of the study area should take into consideration the restoration of *al-Hussainiya al-Haidariya* building, completely demolished in 1991, in its previous location opposite *Bab al-Raja*, one of the main entrances of *al-rawadha al-Hussainiya*. This building is of both religious and cultural importance since it was used as a conference hall for Islamic festivals, in addition to its position as the largest *Hussainiya* in the city. It also used to house the piligrims during important religious occasions.

The proposed design of the *Hussainiya* should take into account the new architectural developments of the study area between the two holy shrines to be consistent with the architectural style proposed for the new city centre.

5. Proposals for Future Traffic and Pedestrian Movements and Parking Areas

The pedestrian movement in the city centre of Karbala is quite different from that in the city centre of other holy cities such as Makka, Madina, Quds (Jerusalem), Najaf and Mashad. This difference stems from the fact that the pedestrian density is concentrated in the present open area linking the two holy shrines in addition to the areas around them.

Therefore, these areas which are defined as the study area has to be given great attention as it is a link between the two holy shrines. This attention should not jeopardise the position and importance of the two shrines but rather be a complimentary part to it.

The pedestrian density gradually decreases as one moves further away from the city centre. The open area is not only a link between the two holy shrines but also the main artery connecting the *souks*, streets and alleys in the old city.

i. Car Parking

The nature of the traffic system in the old city can be divided according to the

following categories:

1- During normal weekdays excluding the religious occasions:

a. This will require providing car parking areas for the pilgrims, shoppers from the city of Karbala, owners of shops and cars carrying funerals during periods that are not among the important religious occasions.

The location of the proposed parking area should be around the study area and separated from the main pedestrian access between the two holy shrines (see plate no. 31).

b. Traffic signals, signs, pedestrian crossing, parking restrictions, traffic movement and traffic police should be provided in the city centre.

2- During the important religious occasions:

It is suggested that the ring road around the old city should be developed by incorporating the maximum possible number of parking areas alongside it to be used when overcrowding occurs in the old city during the important religious occasions. Traffic signals and signs should be added in the ring road and long vehicles such as coaches should be restricted from the city at all times to reduce pollution and should be encouraged to park their vehicles in the assigned parking places in the ring road.

In this respect, the architect Professor Makiya proposes a new underground car park, below the ground level of the study area, to be used by pilgrims during the important religious occasions.

The above proposal was given in a recorded interview made with him in March, 1997.

Having studied this proposal from different points of view, there will be problems in implementing it for the following reasons:

1- The small size of the old city cannot accommodate the great number of cars and couches which may number in thousands during the important religious occasions.

2- Difficulty for the saloon car and coaches used by piligrims to reach the city centre during the important religious occasions due to the congestion resulting from the huge number of pilgrim who may be in hundreds of thousands.

3- The number of cars inside the old city is bound to increase the pollution to a high and unacceptable level.

On the other hand, the proposal presented in our study which consists of providing parking areas during the important religious occasions alongside the ring road surrounded the old city is a more practical and feasible proposal.

This would drive the noise and pollution away from the city centre and prevent traffic jam in this area especially since the access between the ring road and the city centre is within the acceptable walking distance of pedestrians (300 to 800 metres).

ii. Pedestrian Zones

It is proposed that the study area and the city be connected to a proposed pedestrian access which can be categorised as follows:

i. Pedestrian access in the open area (new *sahan*) which links the two holy shrines. This access incorporate exits and entrances from and to the new proposed markets (*souks*), the proposed car parks and the shopping and residential areas around the city centre. Such a proposal will ensure that a safe area away from car traffic and a healthy environment is obtained that will accommodate the heavy movement of pedestrians with ease and comfort.

ii. Pedestrian access in the covered areas around the two holy shrines, alleys and streets linked to them. This access connects the city centre with the parking area in the ring road.

iii. Pedestrian access in the shopping areas (new proposed *souks* in the city centre) that are considered an extension to the pedestrian movements in the city centre. Exits and entrances from and to the shopping areas lead to other area of the old city.

iv. Additional access should be incorporated that can accommodate the heavy pedestrian movements and funeral processions between the city centre and the parking areas in the ring road especially in the external route leading to other cities such as Baghdad, Hilla and Najaf. Here, it is suggested that the pavements of this access should be covered to protect the pedestrian from severe weather conditions such as the direct sun in the summer and rain in the winter.

Furthermore, this access should be planted with trees especially in the middle of the open area (new *sahan*) and at the access leading to the new proposed *souks*.

6. Proposals for Attracting Tourists and Pilgrims

No doubt, the number of tourists and pilgrims arriving to the city will increase when there is real freedom in practising religious rituals in Karbala and if the project involving the restoration of city centre is implemented together with other projects serving the pilgrims such as the tourist and religious service centres and tourist villages. The aim of these villages is to accommodate both tourists and pilgrims in normal periods especially for pilgrims during the important religious occasions.

For this purpose, it is proposed to:

i. Build a tourist village at *al-Razzaza* area that is situated 14 kms. to the west of Karbala city. This site is chosen because it lies on *al-Razzaza* lake and in the

proximity of the city.

ii. Build a second tourist village close to the Awn ibn Abdullah shrine that is situated 12 kms to the north east of the city on the new Karbala- Baghdad highway. This site is chosen since most pilgrims normally pay a homage to this shrine.

These tourist villages should be self sufficient such that all services such as restaurants, children playgrounds, coffee bars, parks and swimming pools should be available. These two villages should be connected to the city with new roads and provided with transport means in order to prevent congestion inside the city.

iii. Similarly, expansion and development of the commercial areas in the old city will play a role in attracting increased numbers of pilgrims and tourists and this in turn will lead to the construction of more hotels and other forms of accommodation whose size is within that of the city buildings.

iv. Furthermore, the traditional buildings around the city centre such as the old houses and *khans* can be used to accommodate pilgrims and tourists in addition to being together with the public baths a good tourist attraction such that this should not affect its nature as a national heritage.

v. Develop Ain al-Tamr (Shfatha) area as a tourist attraction site for the following reasons:

a. It incorporate *al-Ukhaidhir* Fortress that is considered an important historical building in Iraq.

b. It has the advantage of the spread of water springs that gives healthy mineral water which is used to treat certain illnesses such as Rheumatism and skin allergies.

c. It is rich in summer crops such as dates, pomegranates and olives.

vi. It link the city of Karbala with Ain al-Tamur area and the nearby *al-Razzaza* lake area to utilize both of them as tourist sites. This will help to increase the tourist industry in the city of Karbala.

7. Architectural Style and Elements to be Adopted in New Buildings

The special local characteristics of buildings in the old city is basically derived from the local environment and its relation to the religious atmosphere of the city on one hand and its strategic and historical position on the other. Moreover, this is to be coherent with the architectural fabric of the city.

Therefore, it is felt that there is a real need to reflect this speciality of proposed building in the study area by restoring the Islamic identity of the city centre in a new concept and with modern methods that is contemporary to the Islamic values. Current techniques that represents aesthetic attributes should be employed which is coherent with the original shapes, arrangements of styles and architectural elements derived from Islamic thinking, traditions, social values and climatic

conditions. Thus, it can be said that the most significant architectural basic elements that have to be restored from the possibility of loss of its original architectural features is the core of the city represented by the two shrines and buildings between them. Thus, using the architectural elements which makes it possible to revive the Islamic architectural style for the study area. This can be achieved by preserving the reaction and aspiration between most of the architectural basic elements of the local environment and integrating additional architectural elements. This integration represents with the elements in the holy shrines a coherent architectural mass that achieves the new requirements of the city centre. Thus, the buildings has to be enriched with architectural details derived from the traditional buildings of Karbala city. These details consists of decorating works with *a'jur* such as the beautiful complex *muqarnaṣats*, projections, different kinds of geometric decorating work, calligraphic decorations especially with the *Kufi* scripts which was used on a large scale for inscription of verses from the holy Qur'an, *qashani* tiles and the different decorating works with rare wood such as *shanasheel* (*mashrabiyat*).

The above Islamic arts are together termed as the Arabesque. Similarly, the basic elements in buildings built of clay bricks (*a'jur*) such as arches, domes, vaults, friezes decorated with Qur'anic verses are considered a type of Arabesque which is well known in the holy shrines and other religious buildings.

The proposed buildings in the study area should also be decorated in Arabesque. Local building materials such as clay bricks (*a'jur*), gypsum and *qashani* tiles

should be used without losing the simplicity in the building form to enhance the feeling in local identity and gives encouragement, sensual and visual emotions in the main pedestrian access.

6.3. Suggestions and Recommendations

The revival of the building scheme of Karbala city centre requires the implementation of a number of suggestions and recommendations, which it is hoped will be a first step to further suggestions and recommendations by other complementary studies in this field to cover the whole city. The following are the most practical of these suggestions:

1- Integrate the building scheme between the two holy shrines and the proposed buildings within the area. This would require a plan involving a wide open courtyard (*sahan*) as a focal point linking the two shrines bearing in mind that such a plan should preserve the identity of each shrine on the one hand and achieve their integration as an architectural unit on the other.

2- Incorporate shaded pavements (*rawaqs*) between and around the two holy shrines as detailed in section 6.2.2. The aim of this would be to achieve integration in the building scheme of this area and to protect the pedestrians from severe weather conditions.

3- Ensure an architectural fabric that achieves integration in the building scheme of the area between the city centre and the old quarters of Karbala as detailed in section 6.2.2.

4- Build two large new markets (*souks*) in the study area, one on each side of the

new proposed huge *sahan*, opened to it through many high entrances.

5- Add small hotels in the study area to accommodate pilgrims and tourists.

6- Provide public amenities on the perimeter of the study area. These amenities should include public conveniences, public baths (*hammams*), medical clinics, police stations and free drinking-water points (*al-Sabeel*).

7- Rebuild the demolished *al-Hussainiya al-Haideriya* (Conference Hall) on its original site, especially since it was the main hall for holding Islamic festivals of the city.

8- Limit the height of new buildings between and around the two shrines which should be 3 storeys, including the ground floor, and should not exceed the height of the *sahan* walls of the two shrines (approximately 10.50 meters). This will ensure the continuation of the architectural fabric, dignity and domination of the shrines buildings of the city.

9- Limit the types of architectural treatments on the façades of new buildings in order to match the characteristics of the traditional Islamic buildings of the shrines.

10- Use local building materials in the new proposed buildings such as clay bricks (*a'jur*), gypsum and *qashani* tiles, in addition to the use of other building materials such as cement, steel and wood. The use of decorating materials such as marble,

coloured stones and rare wood is also suggested in such a way as to show the Islamic identity of Karbala city.

11- Preserve the well known aesthetic values in the historical and traditional buildings such as decorative works, calligraphic work with Arabic scripts and Arabesque. These characteristics should be taken as inspiration in rebuilding and redeveloping the study area and its surrounding.

12- Separate the pedestrian area from the traffic as this is of vital importance in the daily life of city residents and pilgrims. There should also be additional parking areas around the study area during ordinary days and in the ring road during the important religious occasions.

13- Develop necessary requirements for tourist activities in the city such as a tourist centre and accommodation to give the city additional economic resources that will assist in its growth and flourishment. Moreover, this will be important in presenting its historical and traditional features.

14- Establish an independent heritage organisation in Karbala devoted to the management and implementation of suggestions and recommendations such as those mentioned in this study. This organisation should also supervise the religious, traditional and cultural buildings and aim to preserve such buildings. The funding of this organisation should come from governmental and non-governmental organisations and from regional and international sources.

15- Invite the regional and international organisations that are interested in the preservation of heritage and Islamic architecture to offer their advice and assistance in reviving the cultural side of the city centre including UNESCO, the Agha Khan Foundation for Architecture, and other academic and scientific organisations.

16- Documentation of the historical and religious buildings in Karbala including the two holy shrines by UNESCO as part of humanity's everlasting heritage.

17- Incorporate a museum for the secure display of the rare historical ornaments, jewels, hand written copies of the holy Qur'an, and valued manuscripts that are kept in the two holy shrines. This museum should display the cultural richness of the city and may provide additional income from entrance fees.

18- Establish an Islamic and traditional institute and training centre for handicrafts in Karbala. The aim of this would be to provide skilled craftsmen specialised in Islamic arts, construction work, maintenance and decorating works. Furthermore, schools and workshops specialised in Arabic calligraphy, wood carving and decorating work with steel should be established. Such centres may include experts and professional instructors from Arabic, Islamic and other countries.

These institutes may also offer their services to other Holy Cities in Iraq and other Islamic Countries.

19- Set up and develop local industries specialised in making building materials such as clay bricks (*a'jur*), *qashanic* tiles, decorative work with gypsum and decorative wood-work such as bay window screens (*shanasheel* or *mashrabiyat*).

20- A complete survey programme to be implemented of all important religious and traditional buildings, which have historical and architectural value. These records are to be kept as reference for future conservation and development.

Legislations

1- Issue detailed planning legislation to control new building work and conversion of traditional buildings to other uses. This legislation should aim to preserve the traditional features of the city and its architectural style and should be implemented strictly.

Ideally this legislation should be combined with widescale education of the populace on its importance.

2- Allocate awards to encourage city residents to participate in reviving the historical and traditional buildings and maintain the social spirit through improving their buildings.

3- Establish a policy to preserve and maintain historical buildings involving the granting of loans to repair such buildings or the provision of funds for their

purchase and maintenance by the proposed 'Heritage Organisation' if such work cannot reasonably be undertaken by their owners.

4- The proposed 'Heritage Organisation' should record all the historical and traditional buildings so as to inspect them regularly and renew those in very poor condition according to plans, designed and approved by the planning and Engineering Departments of the Heritage Organisation and the Municipality of Karbala.

Chapter VII: Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this study. These conclusions may be regarded as the main focal points that should be highlighted, although there are other less important aspects that have been referred to in the previous chapters.

These main focal points can be divided into four aspects:

- Historical

- Architecture of the city

- Basic Architectural Elements

- Proposed development of the Study Area

The historical aspect incorporates a number of conclusions, the most important of which are:

a- Karbala in the pre-Islamic period consisted of a number of Babylonian villages that used to surround the present location of Karbala city. The villages are: Ninevah, Amoura, Maria, Saffora, Shfaiya, al-Uqr and al-Nawawis. These villages were flourishing with orchards and farms and inhabited by the Semites.

b- The present city of Karbala is not the same as in the pre-Islamic period. It has assumed a religious position that is entirely attributed to the martyrdom of Imam

Hussain (A. S.), his family and companions on the 10th of *Muharram* in 61 A. H. (680 A. D.). This has later given the city a glorious Islamic status in the Muslim world. The main conclusion that has to be especially emphasised here is that without the presence of the remains of Imam Hussain, his family and companions at this location, the city would not have possessed such an important position. This is because of the absence of other reasons such as economic, political and other factors which would have given the city an opportunity to develop to its present Islamic importance.

c- Because of the existance of the two holy shrines, the city of Karbala has gained a historical and cultural importance not only in Iraq but in the whole Muslim world and has drawn the attention of Muslim rulers and *walis* (governors) from all over the Muslim world.

d- Many Muslim and non-Muslim travellers, historians and orientalists praised the status of this city especially its historical, religious, scientific and architectural aspects.

e- The history of this city is regarded as a major and important part of the history of Islam of Iraq during the past centuries following the event of al-Taff.

f- Karbala played a significant political role in the independence of Iraq from the British occupation in 1920 and also in the foundation of the modern State of Iraq in 1921. This is because Karbala was the head quarter of the Iraqi Uprising and

its leader, the grand *marji'* Imam Sheikh Mohammed Taqi al-Hae'ri al-Shirazi.

g- Since the establishment of Karbala, the city has in various periods witnessed raids, looting and destructions especially during the following periods:

- between 236- 247 A. H. (850- 861 A. D.) by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakil ala Allah,
- in 1216 A. H. (1801 A. D.) by the Wahabis,
- between 1241- 1245 A. H. (1826- 1830 A. D.) by the Ottoman *wali* (governor) Dawood Pasha who laid it under siege for four years
- in March, 1991 by the Iraqi army where all types of heavy weapons were used to destroy the city centre.

h- Karbala city was in various periods a gathering centre for different cultures, civilizations and people from all over the Muslim world. This has been reflected in the tolerance of the city inhabitants.

The conclusions that can be drawn on the city architecture are:

a- The first dome to be built in the history of Islam was the one constructed on the grave of Imam Hussain in Karbala in 66 A. H. (686 A. D.) by al-Mukhtar al-Thaqafi during his rule of Kufa city.

b- The first Islamic school to be built in Iraq was the *al-Madrassa al-Adhudiya*

in Karbala by Adhud al-Dawla al-Buwaihi in 369 A. H. (980 A. D.) alongside *al-Sidra* Gate of Imam Hussain shrine.

c- The city of Karbala reached its peak flourishing period in architecture during three main eras. These are:

1. The Buwaihid rule of Iraq especially in 369 A. H. (980 A. D.) during the rule of Adhud al-Dawla.

2. During the Safavid rule especially in 914 A. H. (1508 A. D.) when Shah Ismail was the ruler.

3. In 1285 A. H. (1868 A. D.). This period is considered of special importance due to the expansion of the city that occurred in the southern and south western direction of Karbala when Midhat Pasha was the Ottoman *wali* (governor) of Iraq.

Finally the conclusions on the architectural basic elements consist of ideas, suggestions and recommendations which aim to present a vision which is possible to implement and can create a major change in the architecture of the city centre in particular and the city in general. These are detailed below:

a- The buildings in the city of Karbala are characterised by features, styles and elements of Mesopotamian architecture as well as buildings of other cultures such as Persian, Turkish and Indian. Part of these characteristics are reflected in the

large *iwans* (galleries), *bahus* (halls), domes, vaults, arches and the use of the various aesthetic elements such as decorative works with clay bricks (*a'jur*), gypsum, *qashani* tiles and different works with wood especially *al-shanasheel*, also known as *al-mashrabiyat*.

b- Both traditional and religious buildings in the old city of Karbala have one major point in common, that is the existence of an 'open courtyard'. This provides Muslims with living requirements such as ventilation, clean environment, social needs and humane aspiration.

c- Before the demolition of the city centre in March 1991, the buildings between and around the two holy shrines were crowded, their density decreasing as one moves further away from the city centre.

d- The main building materials used in the old city of Karbala were clay bricks (*a'jur*), gypsum and *qashani* tiles.

e- The historical and traditional buildings in Karbala are characterised as low in cost and aesthetic in their look. They match their social and cultural life and suitable for the local climate and environment.

f- Since the fifties, the western and south western direction of the city expanded to preserve the architectural and environmental characteristics by keeping the green areas, including the orchards around the city.

g- Before the demolition of the city centre in 1991, the area between and around the two shrines was the main artery of the city as it was the main activity centre for pilgrims and city residents and incorporated the major shopping centres such as the traditional markets (*souks*).

It is worth mentioning that the city of Karbala since the middle seventies suffered a great deal from the random plans of widening and opening streets in the city centre by the central government in Baghdad, without:

1- referring to the concerned local engineering departments in Karbala.

2- taking the advice of architects, consultants, professionals in the specialised departments in Baghdad such as Planning, Engineering, Archaeological and Heritage.

3- putting a proper planning and design to improve the new building status.

However, the above factors resulted in the disappearance of the city Islamic features and its valued architectural and traditional buildings. The most significant signs of destruction which has hit the city in recent years are:

a- The opening of a pedestrian street between the two holy shrines in 1980, which resulted in the deformation of the architectural fabric of the city centre.

b- The intentional destruction of the city centre lying between and around the two holy shrines just after the second Gulf war and the 1991 Uprising.

One may believe that an overall policy should be put forward to cover the architectural, social and economic aspects of the city taking into consideration its unique position as a religious and spiritual centre. This policy should also take into account the nature of the architectural fabric of the city and its relationship with the two holy shrines.

In order to repair the damage in the architecture of the study area caused by the Iraqi government in recent years, we arrived at the conclusion that the most realistic and practical approach is to consider the open area linking the two holy shrines as an integral part of them by converting this area to a common open courtyard (*sahan*) serving both shrines. The open courtyard (*sahan*) should also be connected to the two holy shrines through the shrines' entrances, where both sides are lined with commercial activities and other building facilities, which would serve the increased numbers of pilgrims and tourists of the city throughout the year.

Furthermore, the proposed *sahan* will create a new large open area to serve as a meeting place and a centre of activity for pilgrims and city residents. This will also facilitate the movement of religious caravans between the two holy shrines during the religious occasions.

The proposal as planned in this study will give more emphasis on the size and shape of the city centre in relation to the old city as a whole and its relationship to the pedestrian-scaled environment.

It should also be noted that the architectural basic elements used in the holy shrines and traditional buildings in the city, such as domes, arches, vaults and decorative works in clay brick (*a'jur*) and *qashani* tiles, were adopted in the proposed redevelopments of the study area.

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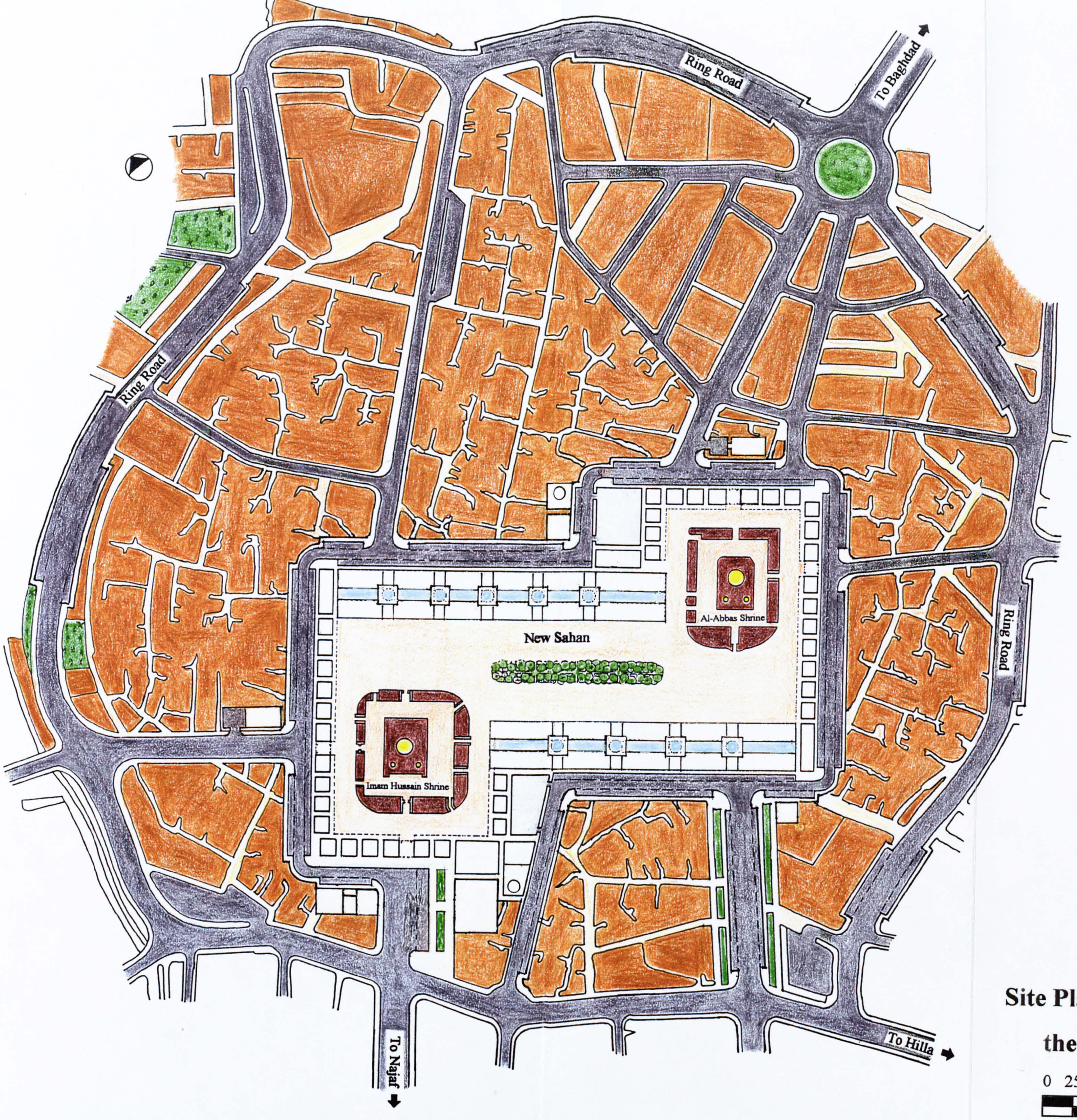

Site Plan of the Old City Showing the Proposed Development

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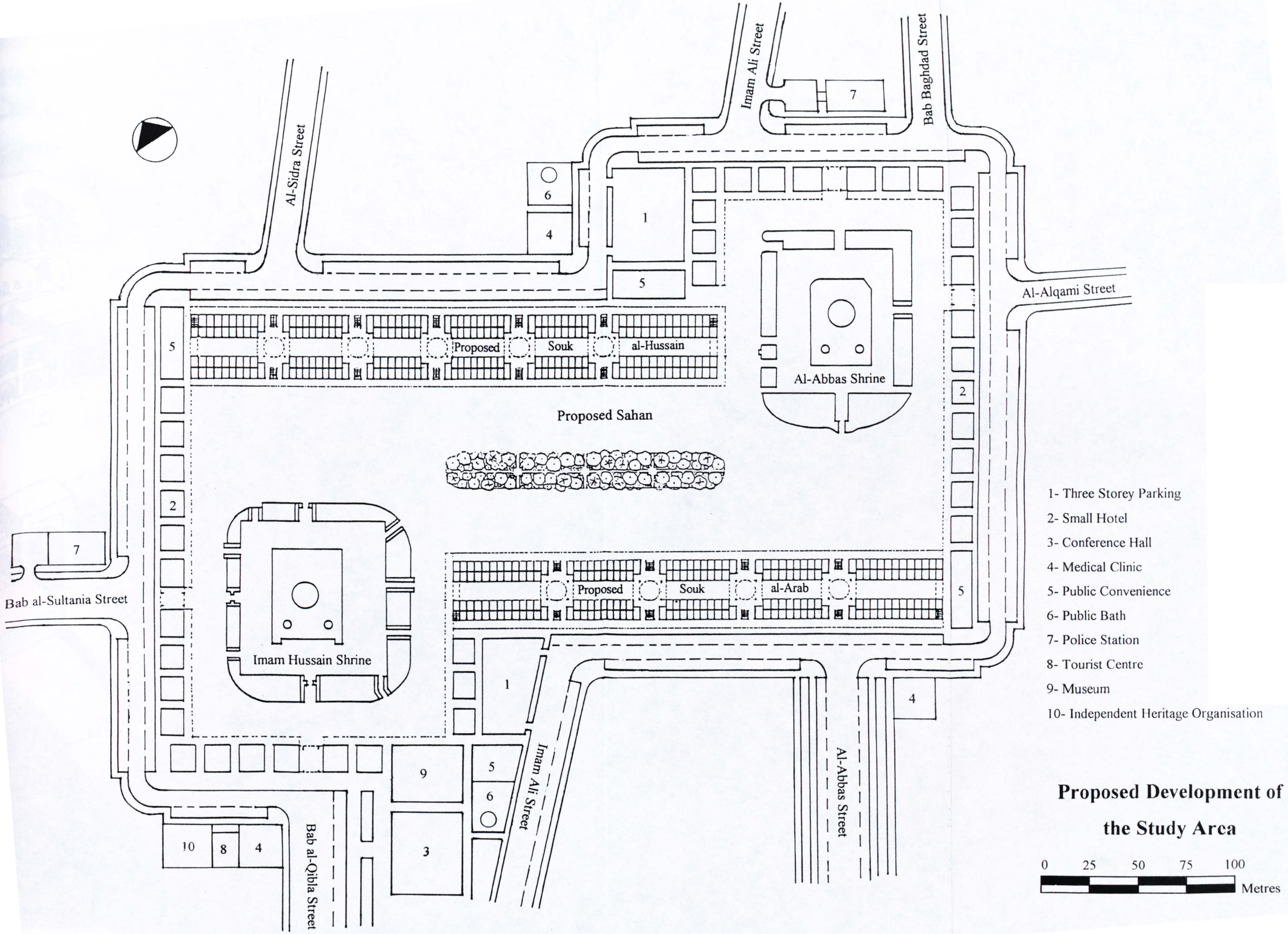
Metres

PLATE -28


Al-Sidra Street
Imam Ali Street
Bab Baghdad Street
Al-Alqami Street
Proposed Souk al-Hussain
Proposed Sahan
Al-Abbas Shrine
Imam Hussain Shrine
Proposed Souk al-Arab
Bab al-Sultania Street
Bab al-Qibla Street
Imam Ali Street
Al-Abbas Street
1- Three Storey Parking
2- Small Hotel
3- Conference Hall
4- Medical Clinic
5- Public Convenience
6- Public Bath
7- Police Station
8- Tourist Centre
9- Museum
10- Independent Heritage Organisation
Proposed Development of the Study Area
0 25 50 75 100
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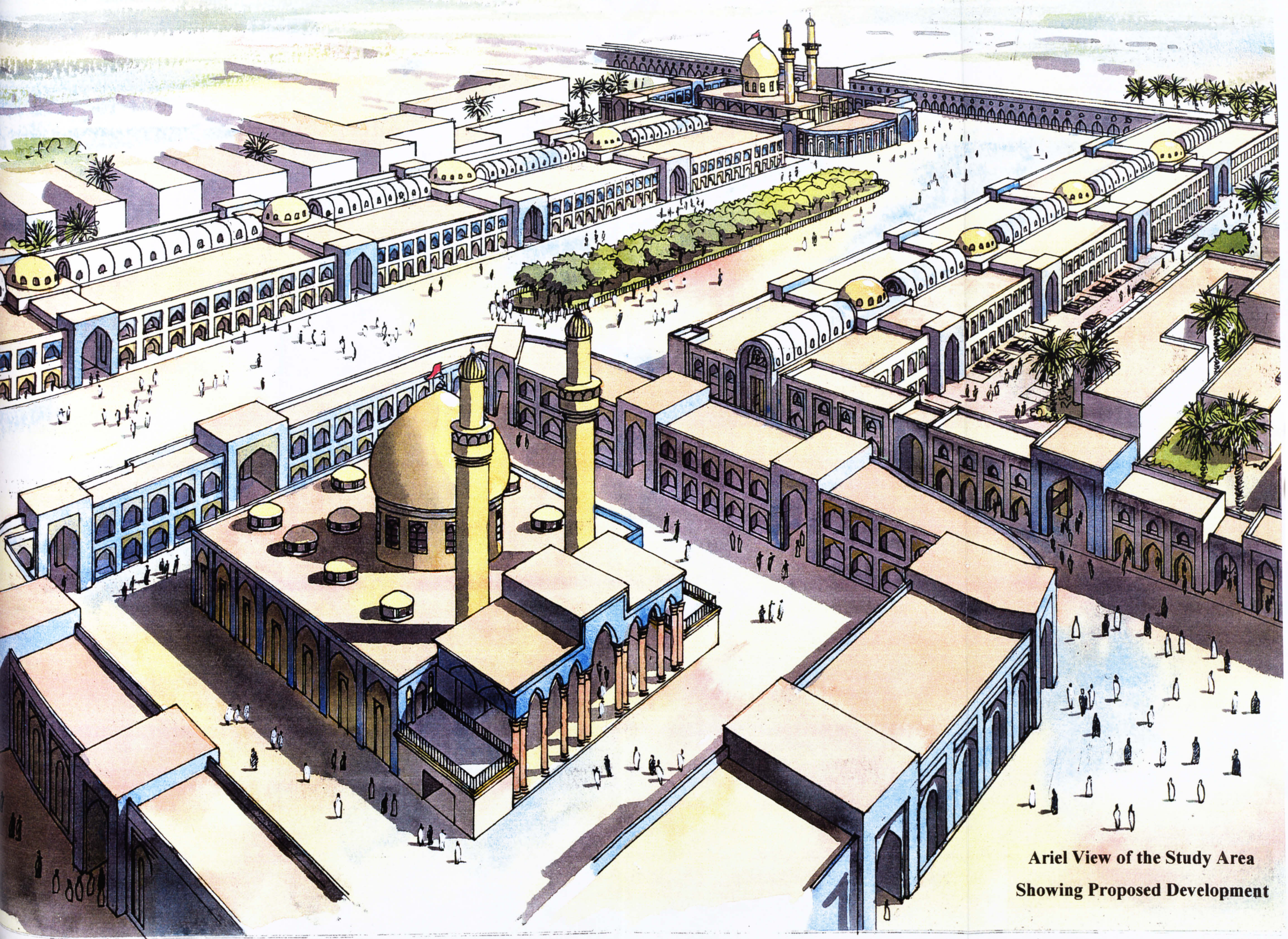
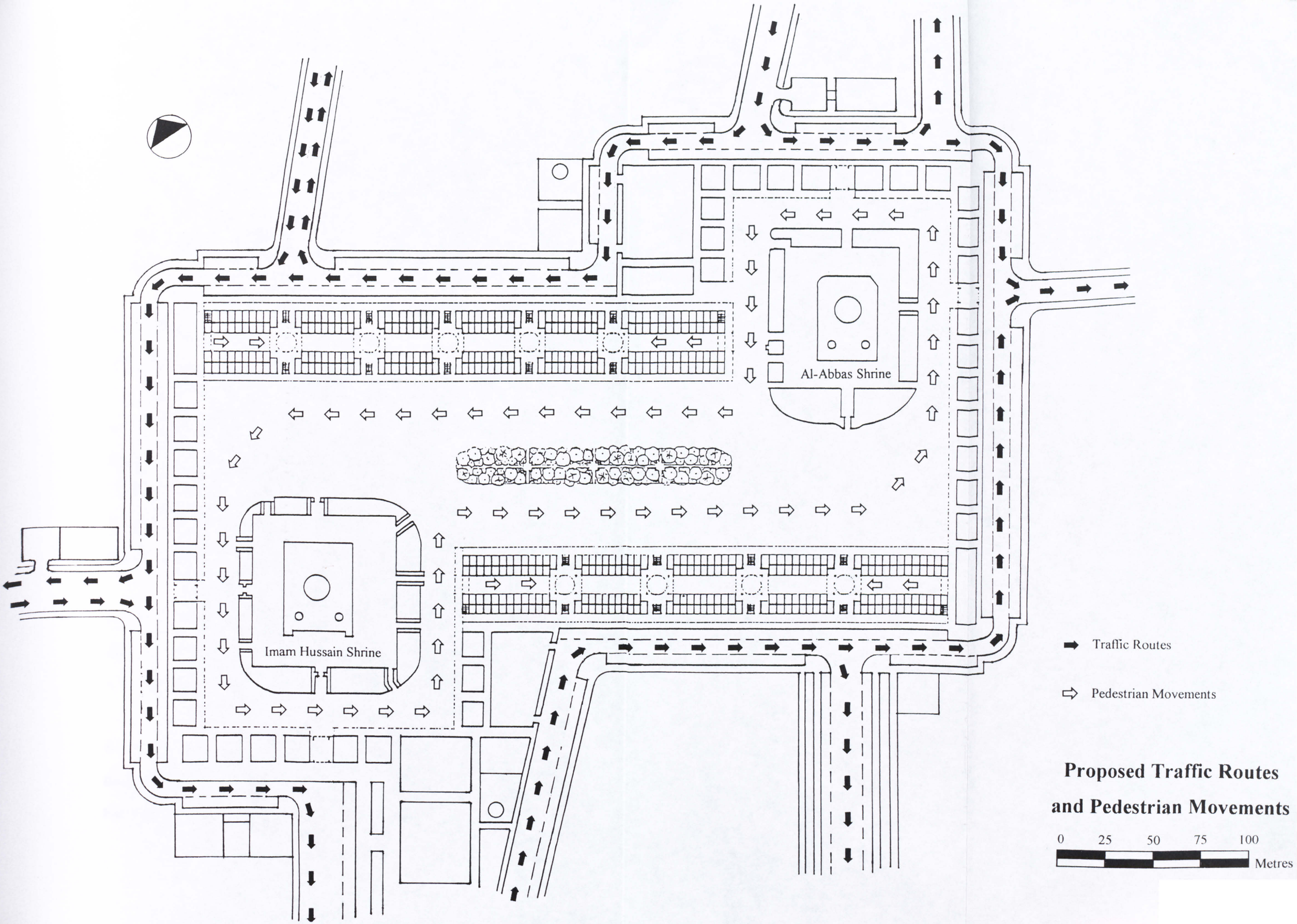


Ariel View of the Study Area
Showing Proposed Development


Al-Abbas Shrine
Imam Hussain Shrine
Traffic Routes
Pedestrian Movements
Proposed Traffic Routes
and Pedestrian Movements
0 25 50 75 100
Metres

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